

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



131 519

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY









AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN  
IN TURKEY





FIG. 1. VARIETY OF CARRIER



FIG. 2. IN HABITAT, UNEARTHED.



AN  
AMERICAN PHYSICIAN  
IN TURKEY

A Narrative of Adventures  
in Peace and in War

BY

CLARENCE D. USSHER, M.D.  
GRACE H. KNAPP, Collaborating

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY  
*The Riverside Press Cambridge*  
1917



*To the memory of my beloved wife and the  
other martyrs, American and Armenian, who  
have laid down their lives for the name of  
Christ in Turkey during the Great World War.*



## PREFACE

IT has seemed to me most desirable that the story of the siege of Van and of the flight from Asia into Europe of most of the present survivors of a martyred race should be told in detail and put into permanent form. As the Armenians of Van were believed to have rebelled against the Ottoman Government, it is important that the facts of the case should be made widely known, and that their actual loyalty, their patience under almost unimaginable provocation, and their heroism when loyalty and patience proved of no avail, should receive their due meed of publicity and appreciation. I speak of what I do know by the witness of my own eyes and ears, my own nerves quivering in sympathy with the torture of the people I have labored for, my own fellowship with their sufferings.

Many other missionaries in other parts of Turkey have also shared in the tragedy that has befallen the Armenian race, some by the giving up of their own lives, others by the sacrifice of what was dearer than life itself.

## PREFACE

When I began this book I meant to write only of the siege and flight and the events that led up to them, preceding these chapters by a chapter or two of travel experiences and memorable conversations with Turk and Christian, but I was persuaded, instead, to tell the whole story of my life in Turkey. Should there seem to be too much ego in these reminiscences, its presence may be explained by the fact that while writing I have seemed to myself to be conversing with those whom I have met face to face, and talked to from lecture platform and in hospitable homes all over the United States for the last two years: listeners who have shown and expressed such kind interest in my personal experiences that I have been tempted to enter into considerable detail in the present volume, which is intended especially for their perusal.

I have recorded some of my most intimately personal experiences because they have so profoundly influenced my outlook on life and my contact with it. The interview with the Moslem Vali, in "Before Governors and Kings," meant so much to me in crystallizing my own religious ideas that I have felt impelled to relate it in this book, and at the request of many friends, will

## PREFACE

include it with the story of Kharaba in a separate booklet at a later date.

My dearest hope is to be able to build a memorial hospital in Van to take the place of the one that has been destroyed. I know so well how exceedingly great is the need for a hospital there. The proceeds of this book will be devoted to that purpose. Should any reader desire to help in realizing this hope, will he communicate with me or with Mr. F. H. Wiggin, Treasurer of the American Board, 14 Beacon Street, Boston?

I would here express my gratitude to my collaborator, Miss Grace H. Knapp, without whose aid this book could not have been written.

I would also acknowledge my indebtedness to the Reverend William E. Strong for permission to use one of the maps from his book, *The History of the American Board*, and to Miss Mabel Whittlesey, of New Haven, to my brother, the Reverend Sydney Ussher, and to the Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief for the loan of photographs for illustrations.

CLARENCE D. USSHER, M.D.

AUBURNDALE, MASS.

October 17, 1917.



## CONTENTS

I. LAUNCHED . . . . .	1
II. A YEAR IN HARPUT . . . . .	10
III. SCENE-SHIFTING . . . . .	20
IV. A GAME OF BLUFF . . . . .	39
V. WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED . . . . .	70
VI. MY HOSPITAL . . . . .	80
VII. A PHYSICIAN-AT-LARGE . . . . .	102
VIII. A MINOR MASSACRE . . . . .	125
IX. MY SABBATICAL YEAR . . . . .	136
X. THE TURKISH REVOLUTION . . . . .	151
XI. "BEFORE GOVERNORS AND KINGS" . . . . .	166
XII. "A CONFERENCE OF THE POWERS" . . . . .	182
XIII. TYPHUS IN THE GARRISON . . . . .	191
XIV. THE KAISER'S PALACE IN JERUSALEM . . . . .	202
XV. 1914 . . . . .	213
XVI. THE RED CROSS IN VAN . . . . .	227
XVII. THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP SEA . . . . .	234
XVIII. A HEROIC DEFENSE . . . . .	247
XIX. FUN FOR JEVDET BEY . . . . .	260
XX. BOMBARDMENT . . . . .	273

## CONTENTS

XXI. BEN-HADAD's HOST . . . . .	280
XXII. OUR TURKISH REFUGEES . . . . .	288
XXIII. THE BLACK DEATH . . . . .	295
XXIV. THE EXODUS OF A NATION . . . . .	301
XXV. IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW . . . . .	315
XXVI. OPPORTUNITY . . . . .	325
APPENDIX . . . . .	333

## ILLUSTRATIONS

DR. AND MRS. USSHER . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
AN OVERTURNED BAGGAGE WAGON . . . . .	20
BITLIS . . . . .	32
A VILLAGE HOUSE IN BITLIS PROVINCE . . . . .	32
PLAN OF VAN . . . . .	36
Based upon a plan published by M. P. Muller-Simonis. From H. F. P. Lynch's <i>Armenia</i> (Longmans, Green & Co., London).	
MOUNTAIN TRAIL SOUTH OF VAN . . . . .	40
BORDER KURDS . . . . .	40
MRS. RAYNOLDS AND SUNDAY-SCHOOL CLASS AT ARTAMID CAMP . . . . .	74
DESTITUTE . . . . .	74
THE HOSPITAL AT VAN . . . . .	88
THE HOSPITAL AFTER THE BOMBARDMENT . . . . .	88
NATIVE BOAT ON LAKE VAN . . . . .	120
KURDISH VILLAGERS . . . . .	134
TYPES OF PEOPLE NOW DESTITUTE: GIRLS' HIGH- SCHOOL CLASS AND ARMENIAN-GREEK FAMILY . . . . .	148
SUMMER CAMP NEAR BITLIS . . . . .	188
JEVDET BEY, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF VAN . . . . .	234
VAN CASTLE ROCK . . . . .	248

## **ILLUSTRATIONS**

ARMENIANS DEFENDING THE TRENCHES BELOW THE MISSION COMPOUND . . . . .	254
ARMENIANS MAKING CARTRIDGES BY HAND DUR- ING DEFENSE . . . . .	254
RUINS OF USSHER HOUSE AFTER THE BOMBARD- MENT . . . . .	278
AMERICAN CHURCH IN VAN . . . . .	278
MOUNT ARARAT FROM THE RUSSIAN SIDE . . . .	312
MAP OF ASIA MINOR . . . . .	332

**AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN  
IN TURKEY**



# AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN IN TURKEY

## CHAPTER I LAUNCHED

“WOULD you be afraid to go to Harput, Turkey? Would you be willing? Could you get ready by the first of September?”

These questions were fired at me in quick succession one morning in August by Dr. James L. Barton, to whom I had been introduced but a few moments earlier and whose eyes had been searching through me as I sat chatting with his associate. They were wholly unexpected questions, for the interview was an unpremeditated and informal one. I had been visiting my boyhood’s home in Canada, and on my way through Boston had stopped to see the headquarters of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, an organization for which I had a profound admiration — the first American organization to send missionaries abroad.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

miles long and forty-five wide, with a long arm extending northward. One hundred and ten villages lie on or very near its shores; the great extinct volcano, Nimrud Dagh, is at the Bitlis end; snow-capped Sipan Dagh, another extinct volcano, is near its northern shore, and the crater of yet another forms one of its bays.

After three long stages of ten hours each we came to Artamid, on the lake shore. A little way out of this large village I saw three American men approaching on foot to greet me. One was Dr. Raynolds, the other two, Mr. Coan and Mr. Blackburn, from Urumiah, Persia, on their way to their mission among the mountain Nestorians in the south. Mrs. Raynolds was waiting in her cart on the other side of a bridge too narrow for her to cross, and when I had climbed in beside her we rode slowly on, stopped often by groups of students, orphans, teachers, and others who had come out to welcome the new missionary.

We were in a great plain, the summit of a plateau fifty-five hundred feet above sea-level, bordered by mountains twelve thousand to fourteen thousand feet high. The city lay before us, its suburbs called Aikesdan (Garden City), with

## IN TURKEY

however, not succeeding in closing out my practice till the following spring; then I sailed from Boston on the S.S. Armenian, May 12, 1898, arriving in Constantinople some time in June.

In Turkey any ignorant native quack might practice unmolested. Diplomaed physicians from other countries, however, had to pass an examination by the Imperial Medical College in Constantinople before the lives of the subjects of this paternal government could be entrusted to their care. I had made a formal application for this examination, which had heretofore been conducted through an interpreter from the American Legation, but after several postponements was informed one day that no interpreter would be permitted; that a new law had gone into effect that very day requiring examinations to be conducted in Turkish or French only. In vain I urged that it was unfair to subject me to the terms of a law passed subsequently to the date set for my examination. The president of the faculty told me that the only way in which I could secure the privilege of an examination through an interpreter would be to "ask our American Ambassador to ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs to request the Minister of the Interior to ask the

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Minister of Education to ask the Grand Vizier to ask His Imperial Majesty the Sultan to permit the faculty to examine through an interpreter." In view of the dilatory methods of conducting all official business in Turkey this looked like postponing the test till I should learn the language.

I had acquired some knowledge of French during my school life in Montreal and during two summers spent in a French-Canadian village. Although I had not spoken the language for thirteen years and had not the technical vocabulary, I informed my examiners that I would try the French. They were probably eager for the twenty-five-pound fee which would be divided amongst them, gave me a very fair test, and passed me, the questions being asked and answered by means of an amusing mixture of French, Latin, and pantomime.

My first custom-house experience was an example of "the spoiling of [their] goods" which Americans in Turkey had to "take joyfully." The American Board had given me for my professional equipment one hundred dollars which I had had to supplement with all of my personal funds. The custom-house officials appropriated one hundred and forty dollars worth of the con-

## IN TURKEY

tents of my boxes. They confiscated my new Standard Dictionary because it contained the "pernicious" words "liberty" and "revolution"; cut the maps out of my Bible because on several of them "Armenia" was to be found; appraised my microscope at twenty times its real cost and made me pay duty on this valuation. The box containing my mattress was sent on to Harput empty; the sanitary inspector at Constantinople informed me that the only way in which I could regain possession of its contents was to obtain an affidavit from the Turkish Consul in Boston to the effect that there had been no horse disease in America when that mattress was made! As the inspector used the article in question throughout the period covered by our correspondence concerning it, it became too populous for my purpose.

When I left Constantinople I bade good-bye to a group of missionaries whom to know was, for a young man just entering upon his missionary career, a wonderful inspiration and incentive to self-sacrificing and devoted service. Among them was the veteran scholar and linguist, the Reverend Elias Riggs, to whom I had brought a message from Dr. Cyrus Hamlin.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

We glided through a dreamland of beauty in steaming slowly up the Bosphorus; low hills wooded to the very edge of the sparkling waves, glittering bubbles of mosque domes, fairy minarets, pastel-tinted houses gleaming palely amid their embowering trees, with red-tiled roofs to lend a dash of warm color to the scene and black pointed cypresses to give it character and a somber dignity, anchoring it to reality; then, orchards, vineyards, scattered villas, and gray crenellated walls and towers centuries old; and the mountain-bordered shores of the Black Sea were a constant delight to the eye with their rich verdure and their picturesque towns and villages climbing steep slopes, clinging to jutting headlands, or encircling deep bays.

We would anchor about a mile from shore at each port and instantly a swarm of small boats would row frantically toward us, looking like excited water-bugs, and our steamer would be boarded by a vociferous crowd eager for passengers and freight.

I left the ship at Samsun and traveled in a spring wagon to Marsovan, where there was a large and important mission plant including a college—Anatolia College—and where I

## IN TURKEY

preached through an interpreter my first sermon in Turkey, and helped celebrate the Fourth of July by a patriotic picnic.

Thence to Amasia, where I was interested in an old castle built by Mithridates and in Roman tombs with great arched doorways carved in the solid rock; then to Tocat, where I photographed the tomb of Henry Martyn. Near Sivas there were hot springs which invited one irresistibly to plunge in. I did so, but in a moment a crowd of natives gathered who showed altogether too much interest in the big blond foreigner who could n't tell them to clear out and who was beginning to find the heat of the water unendurable. Emphatic gestures made no impression on them, and they were just settling down to thoroughly enjoy the spectacle when the driver coming in put an end to the embarrassing situation.

In Sivas also there was a large mission plant with schools of all grades and an orphanage established soon after the massacres of 1895. There was, however, no physician in the station, and I was kept busy examining and prescribing for ailing children while waiting for the araba which was to be sent me from Harput. This araba was a springless "prairie schooner"; the road,

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

miles of which was in the bed of a stream, we traveled was so rough that the jolting frequently caused nosebleed, and was often so steep that we had to put a chain brake on the wheels to keep the great wagon from hurling the horses down the mountain.

The wooded hills of the coast gave way to bleak, bare mountain ranges and treeless, dusty plains where thorns and thistles abounded. There are no scattered farms or country houses in eastern Turkey. The peasants group themselves in villages wherever a natural water-supply is available, as their crops are dependent on artificial irrigation. These villages with their orchards and fields were oases in the desert; Malatia, which we reached after twelve days of travel from the coast, was one of the most beautiful, and here I was hospitably entertained in the home of its Protestant pastor.

When we came to the Euphrates a caravan of camels was being poled across the river, a few at a time, in a great scow, and we had to wait several hours for our turn. At the khan on the farther bank, which was to be our last stopping-place, we were greeted by a group of missionaries from Harput, and the next morning, some miles far-

## IN TURKEY

ther on our way, we were met by more of the Americans and many Armenians who had ridden out to welcome the new missionary. Soon we emerged from mountain passes into the great Harput plain studded with its green villages, and miles away, climbing a spur of the Anti-Taurus Range, could be seen the city itself and its famous old castle on the edge of a precipice from which Tamerlane had hurled hundreds of prisoners to their death.

The buildings of the American Mission were a thousand feet above the plain. Eighteen miles away the Taurus Range began to roll its purple waves toward the horizon. I could not tire of the view from our terrace during my stay in Harput, for it was never twice the same. Sometimes the distant ranges were hidden behind a wall of fog; sometimes we ourselves were shrouded in dense cold mist while the plains below lay warm in sunshine; and again, the mountain peaks rose like islands above a sea of clouds, and against their rocky cliffs dashed high in spray wind-driven billows of sunlit foam.

## CHAPTER II

### A YEAR IN HARPUT

I BEGAN work the afternoon after my arrival in Harput, finding fifty-three patients anxiously awaiting me.

The missionary physician is the best pioneer of Christianity in the Oriental countries which have such terrible need of his services. He enters the most hostile homes and prepares the hearts and minds of those whose bodies he cures for the further Christianizing influences of the mission church and school. But in the nineties the churches at home and their mission boards had not yet begun to realize the importance of the physician's work; so this large station of the A.B.C.F.M., with its schools and churches in the city, its branch schools and churches in sixty villages and towns, its college and theological seminary, and its orphanages where a thousand children left fatherless by the massacres of 1895 were fed and clothed,<sup>1</sup> was without a hospital.

<sup>1</sup> A few years later this number was increased to fourteen hundred, and the children were taught useful trades.

## IN TURKEY

Nor was one built here until 1909, and then by the voluntary gifts of friends who wished to raise a memorial to Annie Tracy Riggs, who died after less than two years on the field.

The houses of the missionaries had been destroyed by Turkish soldiers during the massacres, and President Gates, of Euphrates College, was superintending the construction of three new houses in a solid block to economize space and material. The eastern end was given to me. In this I opened an office, also a dispensary which I stocked with the medicines brought with me from America, and found an Armenian of some experience in this line to act as my apothecary and interpreter. Here I saw patients at all hours, many of them before breakfast; for Orientals, the original daylight-saving peoples, begin the day early.

Operations had to be performed in the patients' own homes. During my first operation for cataract the woman lay on the mud floor of a small room under a window fourteen inches square from which I had to tear the paper glazing to obtain sufficient light. When I performed my first operation for stone I took a door from its hinges and laid it across two stools, placed the

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

man on it, and knelt beside him. Both operations were entirely successful in spite of the unfavorable surroundings.

A large proportion of my patients suffered from ophthalmia, trachoma, and other eye diseases due to unsanitary conditions. Smallpox was prevalent and very often resulted in blindness, for people feared to open the eyes of the sufferer throughout his sickness, or to allow water to touch his eyes or skin. They would treat ophthalmia with sulphate of zinc mixed with powdered sugar; it would cure the disease, but burned the cornea, causing opacities. This is but a sample of the remedies in use by native quacks, many of which, when not absolutely dangerous, were most revolting; as, for instance, this panacea—"sword oil"—made by hanging a "blind mouse" in a bottle of water in the sun till the mouse dissolved, then adding oil.

There were many severe burns to treat, due to peculiar methods of heating and cooking. The most economical way to keep warm was to put a brazier of live coals under a wooden stool, cover it with a large four-inch-thick wool-stuffed quilt, then sit with feet and legs under this quilt. The brazier was often kicked over with disas-

## IN TURKEY

trous consequences. People baked their thin sheets of bread above live coals on the sides of cylindrical ovens sunk in the ground, and their little ones not infrequently tumbled into these ovens. Tiny children often fell from the flat roofs of the houses, where they were allowed to play.

Infant mortality in Turkey was something frightful, about sixty per cent of all the babies dying before completing their second year. This was due mainly to the pitiable ignorance of their mothers. Girls were married very young and became virtually slaves in the homes of their husbands' parents. The first bride in a household might not speak above a whisper until the next son to be married brought his wife home to become in her turn the "slavey" of the family. In Malatia I had seen a "bride" who after forty years of married life was still not permitted to speak aloud in the presence of her father-in-law.

Women wore red veils on their heads both indoors and out. On the street these veils were made to conceal the face. The costume of the men differed slightly from the costume of the same class of men on the seacoast. There I had

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

noted short jackets and trousers, tight below the knee, but with large seating capacity. Here the trousers were not tight below the knee. This apparent waste of material was really an economy, for the usual cross-leg posture on divans or on low cushions works disaster with limited European garments. Those who had adopted "Frank" clothes loved to exchange them, when the business of the day was over, for long, loose calico wrappers in which they might be at ease in the privacy of their homes, and at meal-time sit comfortably on the floor around the low wooden tables on which the food was set in two or three large bowls or platters from which each fed himself with a wooden spoon or a scoop made of thin bread.

A riding horse, rather than a doctor's buggy, was essential to my work, and I want to tell the story of my first horse in Turkey. He was starving to death in his home on the Arabian plain, when Dr. Thom of Mardin<sup>1</sup> bought him for me, there being a famine at that time. When he was brought to me his ribs stood out in bold

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thom with two associates, Miss Fenenga and Dr. Andrus, was deported in 1915 from Mardin to Givas where he died of typhus seven weeks later. No charges had been brought against them.

## IN TURKEY

relief, his shoulder blades protruded, his head drooped till it almost touched the ground, and blood flowed from his mouth with every pull on the bit; this blood proved to be from a leech which had fastened itself under his tongue and sapped his vitality.

With care and feeding he soon put on flesh and regained his original strength. Sixteen hands high, with a long neck, he was unusually tall for an Arab horse, and was a powerful creature. Once in the early days of our acquaintance, when I was leading him in a direction opposite to that in which he wished to go, I suddenly felt myself seized by the muscles of the back, raised from the ground, and shaken as a terrier shakes a rat. I carried the marks of his teeth for months.

Nevertheless, Nedjib was not at all a vicious horse. He was gentle as well as spirited and fleet-footed, seemed to understand everything that was said to him, and was more responsive to a word than to the rein. We became very much attached to each other.

The little manifestation of temper I have described occurred during a vacation trip Mr. Ellsworth Huntington and I had undertaken for the

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

purpose of exploring an unmapped, beautiful lake in the Anti-Taurus Range, which had risen a foot a year for some six hundred years after a natural tunnel under the mountains, its former outlet, had become closed. It has now an artificial outlet into the Tigris River. We took soundings, and photographed it from neighboring mountain peaks. Having ridden to the top of one of these, we made a short cut down on foot, and soon the slope became so steep that in one place Nedjib stiffened his forelegs and slid down like a boy coasting on ice, throwing up a spray of gravel and small stones as he went.

Another incident of the same trip I relate because it illustrates the petty tyranny of Turkish officials, the sort of "bluff" often necessary in dealing with them, and the "pull" my profession has given me in various situations.

We had happened to enter the province of Diarbekir without our passports. Mr. Huntington had heard of an ancient monastery near the town of Arghony on a mountain overlooking the Mesopotamian plain, and we wished to see the very ancient manuscripts we had been told it contained. Returning from our investigations in the monastery to the schoolhouse which

## IN TURKEY

we had made our headquarters, we were informed by a gendarme that the Mudir, or Governor of the town, begged that we should call on him, and that he was awaiting us at the Government building. We went to the Government building to find the Mudir not yet arrived there. When he came he was attended by the entire Town Council. Coffee was brought in and served to all except Mr. Huntington and myself. The meaning of this omission was so obvious that I said to Mr. Huntington, "That was intended as an insult; let us go"; and we returned to the schoolhouse with the Mudir and Council at our heels, calling, "Wait, my lord, wait, my lord."

We were supposed to be the Mudir's prisoners, but this we did not know until a soldier stepped into the schoolroom with us. The school-teacher, Melcone, who had accompanied us to the monastery, was put under arrest, and was to be sent to the Lieutenant-Governor, or Mutessarif, at Maden. The Vali of the Province, a fanatical Mohammedan, had imprisoned a number of inoffensive school-teachers in the city of Diarbekir, and his sub-governors took their cue from him.

Having got Melcone into this scrape, we made up our minds to get him out of it, so started to

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

accompany him to Maden. Downstairs we found the Mudir and Town Council standing before our door. We were told our horses had been taken to the Government building, and we must walk up there.

"We will not. Our horses must be brought to us here."

"Take his saddle-bags to the serai," the Mudir commanded a small boy.

"Set them down," I ordered. The boy obeyed me.

The Mudir then realized the futility of attempting to compel us and withdrew, sending for our horses.

Melcone was hurried off without being given a chance to bid good-bye to his wife, who came running after him with his coat. The mounted soldier who was forcing him along by punching him in the back with his rifle barrel refused to permit the woman to come near her husband. This was too much for me. Riding in between the soldier and his prisoner, I said to the former, "Go on," and to Melcone, "Go back and speak to your wife." The soldier had witnessed the duel of wills between myself and the Mudir and dared not disobey.

## IN TURKEY

While we waited for the Mutessarif at Maden we were entertained by his secretaries and the judge of the court, who, hearing that I was the American doctor from Harput, sent for their friends to take advantage of my services. When the Mutessarif arrived, after due greeting he said:—

“I have a sick friend whom I wish you to see.”

“With pleasure, but will you first kindly release Melcone, who unjustly, without any fault on his part, has been torn from his home and family?”

“Certainly, certainly! Now, will you see my friend?” But he made no move to release the prisoner.

“Your Excellency, will you be so good as to send this man home, and I will then see as many of your friends as you wish.”

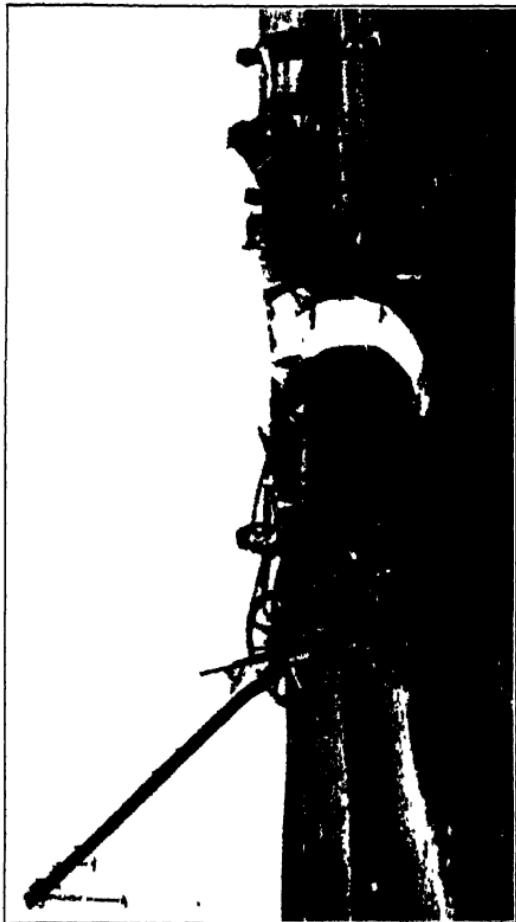
Melcone was liberated, we gave him a present, and he went home happy, while the Mutessarif turned his audience hall into a medical clinic and showed us every courtesy.

## CHAPTER III

### SCENE-SHIFTING

AFTER I had been in Harput a year, it was decided that I should go for six months to Van, as Dr. George C. Raynolds had begged the loan of a missionary for the winter and had suggested that I might take his medical work off his hands, leaving him free to devote himself wholly to general mission work. He and his wife, both over sixty years of age, were alone in that large city. They had the care of about six hundred orphans, the supervision of schools of all grades, and of two pastorless churches with large congregations.

Van was a twelve-days journey distant. I set out with Turkish muleteers with whom I could scarcely exchange a word, having, so far, the Armenian language only. Part of my furniture and outfit was with me on pack-horses, and the usual Turkish zabtieh or guard was furnished by the Government, the fact of whose escort makes the Government responsible for a traveler's safety. When one zabtieh reaches the



AN OVERTURNED BAGGAGE WAGON



## IN TURKEY

end of his "beat," the chief official of the next village provides another.

On the first day of our journey, as we were crossing a dilapidated bridge, Nedjib's right hock went down into a hole and his left foot slipped off a sloping stone out over the river. The bridge was too narrow for me to dismount on either side, so I slipped off over his head. Then, seeing he was about to fall over sideways with the certainty of fracturing his leg, I did the only thing possible under the circumstances—got under him and lifted him on my back. It took me some time to recover from the great strain, but the horse was saved, and we became closer friends than ever.

The village houses in the region we now entered are not of adobe as in the Harput plain, but of unhewn stones, one-storied, low-walled, windowless, with earthen roofs having a hole in the center to let in light and let out smoke from the ovens in the floor. There are no inns, but each village has its guest-room or *odah*. This is an earthen platform with wooden railing, at one end of a large stable. Having one's horses in one's own bedroom is the only way to insure their not being stolen or having their feed taken from them. One must have a bedstead and sleeping-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

bag to keep from being devoured alive, and a small rug is a further protection from assault. The traveler must carry with him his own folding cot, bedding, toilet appliances, and candles or lantern, for nothing of the sort is to be found in the odah. He must also take his provisions with him and cook his meals himself; eggs and milk may sometimes be secured, but not much besides. The village considers it a religious duty to provide accommodations for strangers, but the keeper of the odah never refuses a baksheesh.

The more pretentious houses of the village are two-storied, with the stable on the first floor. We spent a night in one such during this journey. It was the house of a Kurdish chief, and its upper room was forty feet long with a fire place at one end in which half a dozen men could stand.

My muleteer and zabtieh had promised to feed and curry my horse. The curry-comb of the Orient is a saw-toothed, U-shaped piece of sheet metal with an iron rod as brace, on which loose iron rings make a great rattling when the comb is being used. Possibly this is to keep the owner of the horse informed as to his groom's whereabouts!

## IN TURKEY

That night I had such a vivid dream that I sat up suddenly in my sleep and called out, "Haidi, git!" (Get out.). My shout awakened me; it not only awakened my zabtieh and muleteers, but so startled them that they leaped from their beds and ran downstairs, and I soon heard the curry-comb in vigorous use. Their consciences were evidently pricking them about a duty left undone. I had too little Turkish at my command to explain the joke when they returned sheepishly to the room.

The following day we were fifteen hours in the saddle. There was a cold October rain, and when the sun set it became so dark that I could not see my hand six inches from my face. The only way in which I could follow my guide (a zabtieh) was by laying my hand on his horse's flank as he rode along in the darkness.

Suddenly I felt the zabtieh's horse drop away and, fearing something serious had happened, halted Nedjib. However, I heard the rattling of stones as the other horse walked on, so followed, down a gully, through a small stream and up the other side, and then I heard the zabtieh dismount and grope along a wall till he found a door, on which he pounded vigorously.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Soon there was a voice from within calling in Armenian, "Who is it?"

"Open!" answered my zabtieh in Turkish. Three times this dialogue was repeated; the third time the zabtieh shouted, "It is a consulos (foreigner). Open the door and let him in."

"Go to my neighbor; he has a better house; my house is not fit."

"Open!!"

"My house is not fit; go to my neighbor; he has a better house."

"Open!!!" yelled the zabtieh, and afraid to disobey any longer, the man opened the door about two inches, placing his foot firmly behind it, and against the light from within we could see the profile of a villager peering into the darkness. I addressed him in Armenian. "Open the door, brother, and let us in. It is cold and wet and dark; let us in that we may spend the night."

Surprised at hearing his own language spoken, he threw the door wide open and stood gazing while I dismounted, approached him, and again asked for admission.

"Oh, sir," said he, "my house is not fit. Go to my neighbor; he has a better house."

## IN TURKEY

"That does not matter. You let us in and we will make the house 'fit,'" I replied.

With Oriental courtesy he then stepped out of the doorway, and waving his hand toward the interior, said, "Enter, the house is yours."

We passed into a large room, the roof of which was supported by posts; in the far right-hand corner it had fallen in—the unrepaired damage of massacre times. The rain was drizzling through, making a puddle on the earthen floor; close by a lot of poles were laid against the wall, thus forming a chicken coop; here, too, were a wooden harrow, and a plow of the kind used in the time of Virgil—a little more than the forked branch of a tree. To the left was a large fireplace and an immense copper pot in which was stewing something which emitted a very offensive odor. A small *jirak*, or native lamp made of a piece of clay which had been flattened and the edges turned up and then burned in the fire, was on the shelf over the fireplace. A dip wick hanging over its rim emitted a smoke that made us cough. Everything was black with smut. In the far corner to the left were some large grain pots the height of a man, and a pile of dried manure used for fuel.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

"You see, sir; I said my house was not fit," said my host.

"Never mind, we will make it fit," again I replied, and calling my muleteers, I had them remove the farm implements and carry the foul-smelling pot to another part of the house. They swept the dusty earthen floor and spread my bright-colored Turkish rug at the right side of the fireplace; my folding cot-bed and camp-stools were set up on this; the provision-box was put on the other side of the hearth, the top of it forming a table; last of all I got out my American lantern with its crystal-clear chimney, lighted it, put it in place of the *jirak*, and lo, what a transformation!

These villagers were far from civilization and had probably never seen a lamp with a chimney before. They gazed open-mouthed, then ran to the back of the house to call the women to come and see the wonderful light and the beautiful things the foreigner had brought. The women in turn ran out to call the neighbors, and soon there were lined up against the wall about a dozen men, picturesque in their white felt caps and colored turbans, black and gold jackets, gaudy silk shirts, and wide straight trousers.

## IN TURKEY

I invited my host to eat with me. In shocked surprise he replied: "Oh, sir! that would never do! In my house you must eat of my food, but, sir, I have nothing. Nothing but a little bread and some madzoon."<sup>1</sup>

"Never mind," said I; "bring your bread and madzoon, and I will eat of your food and you shall eat of mine."

So we sat around my provision-box, the zabtieh, my host, and I; and I questioned the young man about himself and his village. His name was Garabed and the name of the village was Kharaba.

He was about twenty-seven years of age, the head of a family of twenty, his elder kinsmen having been killed in the massacre. The village church had been destroyed and its priest slain. Once a year at Easter a monk from a distant monastery would come to the village and celebrate mass. There was no school.

"Are you a friend of the Lord Jesus?" I asked him.

His jaw dropped and a stupid, far-away look came over his face as he grunted interrogatively. I repeated the question with the same result,

<sup>1</sup> Fermented milk.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

then changed the form of it, and asked, "Is the Lord Jesus a friend of yours?"

Quick as a flash he answered, "No, sir, he could n't be."

"Why not?"

"My heart is too black. Jesus could not be a friend of mine."

"Why is your heart too black?"

Without hesitation, but with a look of sadness and shame, he lowered his voice and replied: "I swear and lie and steal. Jesus could not be a friend of mine."

I urged that he was just the kind of sinner to whom Jesus wanted to be a friend, but again came the stupid, far-away look, and he did not seem to understand. Discouraged, at last I proposed that we should have family prayers before retiring. He evidently did not know what I meant, but nodded acquiescence. Anxious to have some native do the reading, I asked for a Bible, but was told there was none in the village, and no one who could read it. I then got out my own Armenian Bible from my saddle-bags and prayed to be guided as to what to read. The book opened to Revelation 3:20, and I read, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any

## IN TURKEY

man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me."

Instantly I saw the parable. I reminded the young man how I had come to his door and knocked, and he had said to me, "Go to my neighbor; my house is not fit," just as he was saying to Jesus, "My heart is too black." I reminded him that I had said, "Just let me in and I will make it fit." I had not asked *him* to clean up; as soon as he had said, "Enter, the house is yours," I had had my men remove his poor belongings, sweep the floor and bring in the handsome rug and the chairs and the wonderful light which he called the neighbors to see. "Just say the same to Jesus, 'Come in! My heart and life are yours,' and *He* will clear away all the lying and stealing and blasphemy and make the heart a fit place for Himself. He will bring in beautiful things and a wonderful light which will attract others."

As I explained it thus a light broke over his face.

We prayed together, and then I retired, my host standing about to serve me in any way he could. As I was about to get into bed he asked

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

timidly, "Sir, wouldn't you let me read that book?"

"What! *Can* you read?"

"When I was a boy I wanted very much to learn, so I ran away to the monastery, and the monks taught me a little. I think I could read it."

So I marked some passages, turned down the corners of the pages and left the book with him. I awoke at midnight to find him sitting on the carpet with the Bible on the little camp-stool and the lantern hanging from the mantel-shelf. He was following each word with his finger and spelling out every syllable. I slept and awaked at two o'clock and he was still poring over the book, just then spelling out John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I slept again, and when I rose at four o'clock he was still reading, and there was a light on his face which was not the light of the lantern.

When I left that morning I offered him money for the accommodation of the night, but he would not accept it. As I was putting the Bible in my saddle-bag, he asked if I would give it to

## IN TURKEY

him. Since it was the only one I had with me, and I might need it somewhere else on the road, I promised to send him another copy. This I secured the next day in Mush from a colporteur of the American Bible Society.<sup>1</sup>

Garabed died three years later of cholera, but he left his mark on the life of the village. I found there, when I passed through in August, 1914, a school and a church, the fruit of that night's experience, and a neat, two-story house was standing where the dingy, ruined hovel had been.

From Kharaba we made our way through the mountains, leading our horses over roads that were like stairs with steps that were sometimes two and a half feet high. The villages here cling to the sides of the hills, their earthen roofs and stone walls so exactly the color of their background as to be hardly distinguishable from it in the distance. One can ride off the road on to the roofs of the houses, and I have twice, when traveling, broken through into the living-room of a dwelling—my first intimation that I was riding over a roof and not along a path on the side hill.

We spent twenty-four hours in Mush, beauti-

<sup>1</sup> This society is doing splendid work in all mission lands.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

fully situated among the hills, but one of the filthiest cities in the world. On our way to Bitlis we passed the village of the celebrated Kurdish chieftain, Musa Bey, and the spot where fifteen years before, after having managed in some way to separate them from the rest of their party, he had set upon Dr. Raynolds and Mr. George Knapp, Sr., of Bitlis, with a band of horsemen, and after a short, sharp tussle had overpowered and bound them, inflicting several sword wounds on Dr. Raynolds's head, face and hands. Then he robbed them and left them bound in the woods, some distance from the road. Dr. Raynolds managed to work his arms free after a while, and untied the bonds of his companion.

I spent Sunday in Bitlis, an American Board station founded by Mr. Knapp in the late fifties. At this time it was manned by the Reverend and Mrs. Royal M. Cole, Misses Charlotte and Mary Ely, and Miss Knapp. The Misses Ely had worked for thirty-one years in this city. They were wonderful women, but their story and the story of Bitlis is to be told elsewhere and I will confine myself to my personal experiences.

A few hours after leaving Bitlis the sapphire-blue waters of Lake Van in their setting of mag-



BITLIS



A VILLAGE HOUSE IN BITLIS PROVINCE



## IN TURKEY

nificent mountains came into view. Pliny writes of Lake Arissa, as it was then called. In his time it was supposed to be a lake of borax water so heavy that the sweet waters of Bendamahe River, flowing in from the northeast, held to the surface without mingling with the waters of the lake till they reached the only outlet, a natural tunnel at the other end. There is a tradition that six hundred years ago there was a dispute between the Kurds and the Armenians of Akhlat. The courts decided in favor of the Armenians, so the Kurds, enraged, brought great sacks of wool and threw them into the mouth of this tunnel which was soon effectually blocked by the accumulating silt and deposit. The lake rises a yard or more each spring and is reduced about three fourths of its rise each summer.<sup>1</sup> It has gradually engulfed villages and towns and has appropriated to itself hundreds of thousands of acres of the most fertile land of the Van plain, thus impoverishing many of the inhabitants. The main body is seventy

<sup>1</sup> Lakes Van, Urumiah and Sevan (in the Caucasus) rise and fall periodically; from which fact some have argued an underground connection. My theory is that for seven years after the maximum sun-spots, precipitation exceeds evaporation; succeeding this period the rain-and-snow-fall is less, and evaporation slightly exceeds the precipitation.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

miles long and forty-five wide, with a long arm extending northward. One hundred and ten villages lie on or very near its shores; the great extinct volcano, Nimrud Dagh, is at the Bitlis end; snow-capped Sipan Dagh, another extinct volcano, is near its northern shore, and the crater of yet another forms one of its bays.

After three long stages of ten hours each we came to Artamid, on the lake shore. A little way out of this large village I saw three American men approaching on foot to greet me. One was Dr. Raynolds, the other two, Mr. Coan and Mr. Blackburn, from Urumiah, Persia, on their way to their mission among the mountain Nestorians in the south. Mrs. Raynolds was waiting in her cart on the other side of a bridge too narrow for her to cross, and when I had climbed in beside her we rode slowly on, stopped often by groups of students, orphans, teachers, and others who had come out to welcome the new missionary.

We were in a great plain, the summit of a plateau fifty-five hundred feet above sea-level, bordered by mountains twelve thousand to fourteen thousand feet high. The city lay before us, its suburbs called Aikesdan (Garden City), with

## **IN TURKEY**

their orchards and vineyards, stretching greenly eastward from the old walled city for four miles.

This walled city, with its crowded houses, its mosques and minarets and churches and bazaars, lay at the base of a great rock rising three hundred feet sheer above it, on the summit of which stood the towers and battlements of an ancient castle; on the lakeward side was carved in cuneiform characters a tri-lingual inscription by Xerxes; its northern side, covered with earth and verdure, sloped steeply to the plain. Within the rock were ancient excavations—a series of scene chambers.

The suburbs were bounded on the north by the Heights of Toprak Kale (see map of Van). At their eastern end, hewn into the face of the cliff was a tablet inscribed with the names of many gods. This was known as Meher Kapusi, or Choban Kapusi (Shepherd's Gate) from the shepherd who entered the treasure-house this tablet was said to have sealed and never returned. On the east Aikesdan was bounded by a plain from which rose abruptly Mt. Varag, ten miles from the lake and 4500 feet above its surface.

Van was the capital of the Vannic Kingdom of

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN,

the Assyrian period.<sup>1</sup> Armenian historians call it Shamiramagerd, or City of Semiramis. This famous Assyrian queen had been regarded as a myth by modern historians up to the very time I entered the city. But Dr. Lehmann-Haupt and Dr. Belck, of Berlin, had just completed the researches in that region which proved that she had been a real woman, occupying a position of unique importance in the palace of the Assyrian king about 800 B.C. Dr. Belck had left Van just before I arrived; Dr. Lehmann-Haupt had been my guest in Harput a month before I left that city, and had told me about Semiramis's tablet which he had discovered in the Shamiram Su, on which had been inscribed the statement that she had built this great aqueduct, bringing water from the mountains to irrigate Van plain.

In the village of Lesk, northwest of Toprak Kale, was an oddly shaped rock, and on this rock a shrine. The story goes that Semiramis fell in love with Aram, King of Van, and was determined to marry him. Aram would not say yes and she would not take no for an answer. She came with an army to enforce her suit, and Aram

<sup>1</sup> See first part of Chapter X for a brief account of its history and of the ruins found *within* Toprak Kale Mountain.





## IN TURKEY

was killed in battle. Then, woman fashion, she repented, built this shrine for him, and made Van her summer capital.

Soon we entered the main street of the Garden City. This was sixty feet wide, though most of the other streets were extremely narrow. It was bordered by double rows of trees, mostly poplars and willows, with a water-course on each side. All sorts of domestic ceremonies were being performed on the banks of these water-courses : here a Moslem was washing his feet; farther down was a woman washing dishes and cooking-utensils; still farther down, another Moslem was rinsing his mouth from the same small stream; because it was running water it was considered clean.

The houses, built flush with the street, were, like those of Harput, of sun-dried brick laid in mud and plastered with mud mixed with straw, to protect the walls from the weather. The flat roofs were of earth; the windows of the first story were small and high above the ground.

At the southern edge of the middle third of the Garden City were the American premises, situated on a slight rise of ground. They were enclosed by a high mud wall. A great double-

## **AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN**

leaved wooden gate opened on the street. Within these gates I was again warmly welcomed by Dr. and Mrs. Raynolds to what was to be my home for the next sixteen years.

## 'CHAPTER IV 'A GAME OF BLUFF

I HAD been in Van but ten days when my work, which had begun the evening of my arrival, was interrupted by the first of dozens of trips that I have undertaken, either on professional errands or as escort to newcomers. Miss Elizabeth Barrows, sent by the Woman's Board of Missions to take charge of the girls' schools in Van, and Miss Virginia Wilson, sent by the Friends of Armenia in London to assist Dr. Raynolds in his work for the orphans, had just left Constantinople on their way via Trebizond to the interior, when Mr. Peet telegraphed Van station, "Meet ladies with saddles Erzerum."

I traveled to Erzerum by way of Bitlis, having been asked to do so by telegram, as Miss Charlotte Ely had fallen ill since my stop there in October. From Bitlis I took with me as servant a man who had accompanied to Erzerum in 1896 a party of missionaries, among whom were Mrs. Knapp, Sr., Mrs. Knapp, Jr., and Mr. Herbert

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

'Allen, and just before we reached a particularly dangerous place in the mountains near Madjidlu, where the road was only a goat-path along the edge of a precipitous slope, he told me what had happened there on his former journey. The ladies were riding in moffahs—large boxes with canopies—hung on each side of a mule, some tipping of whose pack-saddle caused him to place a hind foot too near the edge of the path; the earth gave way, and down went the beast, head over heels, in spite of Garabed's hold on the halter. Mr. Allen, also seizing the halter, was pulled out of his saddle and described a half-circle through the air. Ladies, moffahs, and mule rolled over and over down the precipitous slope for three hundred feet, landing in a snow-bank upside down, the animal's four feet sticking straight up between the smashed moffahs. Strange to say, his riders escaped serious injury, one of them getting off with only a sprained ankle, the other with a few bruises.

After hearing this story I rode ahead to see that our heavily laden pack-horse safely crossed that particularly bad bit of road, which was now ice-covered. Dismounting there I stood below the path on the mountain slope and had just firmly



MOUNTAIN TRAIL SOUTH OF VAN



BORDER KURDS



## IN TURKEY

planted one foot on a projecting rock when the load-horse passed, slipped on the ice, and most of his weight came upon me. Bracing myself, however, I sustained this until he regained his footing and passed safely on.

The usual guard, or zabtieh, whom I secured at Madjidlu, was determined to take me four hours out of my way so that he might visit a certain village, but I was as determined that he should not. Garabed acted as my interpreter; suddenly the zabtieh sprang upon him in a rage, his fingers bent like claws as if he would tear the man to pieces, his mouth open, showing fang-like teeth with several missing—a terrifying sight. I thrust my arm between the two, whereupon the zabtieh began to draw his saber from its sheath. Then I seized him by the shoulders and shook him until his teeth chattered; this procedure subdues a man more effectually than blows. As soon as I let go he leaped for his horse and fled as though pursued by a demon, so I entered the city at night without a guard.

Erzerum is situated on a mountain-bordered plateau over six thousand feet in altitude and is surrounded by a wall eighty feet thick; its gate-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

ways are like tunnels and a sentry is always at the inner entrance. To my surprise I was taken under guard by four soldiers to the mission house — the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton — where I found a strange situation had developed. Miss Barrows and Miss Wilson had already arrived and with them a Miss Bond from England, who was to assist in the orphanage at Erzerum. A telegram had come to Erzerum for the two English ladies from the Secretary of the Friends of Armenia, saying: "Committee decide Wilson stay at Erzerum. Bond proceed Van."

Now, in Abdul Hamid's time the use of certain words like "revolution, liberty," etc., was absolutely forbidden in Turkey and even Turks had to use substitutes for these words — a cipher code, as it were. The substitute for "revolutionary society" happened to be "committee," so the officers of the Porte in Constantinople were greatly exercised over this telegram and wired to the Governor-General of Erzerum: "Who are these men, Wilson and Bond? Do not let them go on. Send them back to Constantinople." The Vali, after questioning the American and British Consuls in Erzerum, informed the Porte that Bond and Wilson were not men, but innocent ladies

## IN TURKEY

who were accompanied by an American lady, Miss Barrows. The command came back, "Do not let them go on"; and thereafter the house where they lodged was watched day and night by the police and orders were given the sentries at the gates of the city not to let the *Americans* depart—a peculiar embargo, considering that those under suspicion were British subjects.

The ladies urged the British and American Consuls to secure their release, and repeated telegrams to Constantinople brought assurances that the Porte *would* order this, but the Vali protested that his first instructions had not been countermanded and he could not permit them to leave the city. The matter dragged on for weeks, until finally I telegraphed Mr. Peet to "persuade ambassadors to permit consuls to escort ladies out of the city. I will escort them to Van." A few days later a telegram came to each consul, "Use your own judgment and act with your colleague," whereupon they united in an effort to get us out.

The American Consul said that he would not permit me to escort the ladies unless I would go fully armed. As I did not carry weapons I told him that he must arm me, and he gave

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

me a six-shot army revolver and a thirteen-shot Remington rifle. As it was late in December the roads were covered with snow, so sleds were hired for the journey—rough, low wooden sledges drawn by horses. On the morning we were to start, as we were getting into these the American Consul came running breathlessly to us with the words: "I can't let you go! I can't let you go! I have heard that they have put twenty soldiers at the gate to stop you. Something might happen to the ladies. I can't let you go."

I suggested our going to the gate anyway; if we were stopped there we should then have tangible proof of Turkish interference to communicate to our ambassadors.

"All right," he acquiesced.

Thereupon he drove off with the ladies, while I went to the stable for my horse, then rode rapidly to the gate; not finding the others there I supposed they had succeeded in getting out of the city, and so started to go through the tunnel-like entrance.

"Halt!" called a Turkish soldier.

"Coming back in a minute," I returned, with a wave of my hand, and hurried on to overtake

## IN TURKEY

the rest; when halfway through the tunnel another soldier ran and seized my bridle.

"Let go!" I exclaimed, breasting my horse against him and raising my whip. He let go and I emerged from the tunnel only to be greeted by yet another "Halt!" from a soldier who ran down the slope of the rampart, drew a cartridge from his belt, and loading, leveled his rifle at me. I felt my bluff must be carried further, so I rode my horse against the barrel of his rifle, glared at him, and demanded the meaning of this insult.

"I will see your officer about this," I continued, turning back through the gate and calling for the officer of the guard. From him I demanded the name of the man who had leveled his rifle at me.

"We have orders not to let the Americans out."

"Orders not to let the Americans out! Who dared give such an order? I have my passports and papers all right. I will see the Vali about this." And I drew from my pocket notebook and pencil. The soldier uneasily shouldered his rifle and began to march off at double-quick pace, but I blocked his way and again demanded his name. The officer, now beginning to fear that he had held up the wrong man and would suffer for his

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

mistake, began to plead: "Please do not say anything to the Vali! Please go out! Please go out!"

I rode out, but to my surprise found no trace of my party, and after ascending a hill from which the road could be seen for miles, returned to the city and to the house of our host, to which presently the sleds also returned, the consul having contented himself with a drive through the market-place without having approached the gates.

"The trouble is with you, Ussher," he called out, as soon as he saw me. "I can get the ladies out, I can take a stand for them that I cannot for a man, but I can't get you out. If I get the ladies out and you are stuck here, what a predicament they will be in!"

"If that is all your difficulty, give me your word of honor as a gentleman that you will bring the ladies out to me and I will show you whether I can get them out or not," I replied, not thinking it necessary to relate my experience at the gate.

It was arranged that I should start the next morning with the sleds in which the ladies were to ride and their baggage, and that the following day the consuls should bring the two ladies to me

## IN TURKEY

at Komatsore village, a fifteen-hour journey from Erzerum. The American vice-consul and a kavass from each consulate would accompany us to Van. At the American Consul's request I consented to take the rifles of the kavasses in the sleds under the robes, as he did not wish them to be seen carrying these weapons when leaving the city.

The next morning when I stopped at the gate for passport formalities the driver of my first sled leaned over and whispered to the police officer, "There are rifles in the sled." With bulging eyes and swelling chest the officer strode to the sled, thrust his hand under the robes, and began to pull out a rifle.

"That is mine," I quietly remarked. The man looked up at me, towering above him on Nedjib, but continued his attempt.

"That is mine!" I repeated more emphatically. He looked at me again, and this time he recognized me as the one who had discomfited the guard at the gate on the day previous, and, thrusting the rifle back, waved his hand and said, "Gitch, gitch" (Pass). When we were outside he sent a messenger after me to request a baksheesh for having passed me!

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

It had now begun to snow, and snowed steadily the remainder of the day and all the following night. My drivers did not report for duty the next morning, but sauntered nonchalantly into my *odah* in Hassan Kala at two o'clock in the afternoon, with no intention of going on that day. I ordered them to hitch up and start at once, fearing my party might get to Komatsore by some other route in advance of me.

For four hours we struggled through the snow to Kupri-Kuey (bridge-village), three miles distant. By that time the horses were exhausted and going on to our rendezvous that day was out of the question. I hired a man to watch the road all night and tell our friends where I was, should they pass; but he was so sure they could not pass that he went to bed and to sleep. On looking out in the morning I saw two sled tracks and was hot on the trail at once; but we soon found that these tracks had been made by village sleds and not by those we were expecting and which we did not find at Komatsore on our arrival there. Nor did they appear the next day, and at night I went to bed with an anxious mind.

"They have come! They have come!" aroused me at four o'clock the next morning, and in a few

## IN TURKEY

moments my friends were in my *odah* and telling me their story.

They had driven to the city gate the day after I left, and there soldiers leveled their rifles at the consuls, forbidding them to take the ladies out of the city. The driver of the first sled stopped, terrified, but the dragoman of the American Consulate, standing behind him, called, "Go on! Go on!" meanwhile punching him in the back until he feared the fist behind him more than he feared the rifles in front, and drove on. The soldiers did not fire.

But no creature had passed over those roads since the third foot of snow had fallen; they lost their way, were unable to find the road again, and when it grew dark were obliged to return to the city.

The next morning the dragoman went to the Vali to tell him of the insult offered the American Consul at the gate. His Excellency, alarmed, called the colonel of the garrison and said to him, "I ordered you not to let the Americans out, but you must not on any account interfere with the consuls."

In the meantime a large caravan of camels had come into the city, thus breaking the road; so that

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

afternoon the consuls and their charges started on another sleigh-ride, were saluted by the soldiers at the gate, kept on all night with the bells taken off their sleighs, and arrived at our rendezvous at 4 A.M., as I have stated.

The consuls urged us to go on at once to Delli Baba, four hours distant, rest there until the moon rose at midnight, then push on, for they feared we would be pursued by the Turks. They left with us as our escort, according to the arrangement already mentioned, the dragoman of the American Consulate, Mr. Ojalvo, who was also acting Vice-Consul, with a Turkish and an Armenian kavass, huge men both. Besides these I had my own official guard, or zabtieth.

At Delli Baba we found quarters in an Armenian house. A shelf like a modified hen-roost extended from the fireplace to near the door at each side of the long, narrow room; on this were laid felts and cushions, and here we settled ourselves high enough from the ground to be free from certain numerous small, black acrobats.

Suddenly, "Avakh! Soldiers are surrounding the house!" shrieked a boy, rushing in, his eyes bulging with terror.

Stepping to the door I found this to be true.

## IN TURKEY

There were ruins all about the house—memen-toes of the massacre of 1895—and above every hummock appeared a fez and rifle barrel.

While we were discussing what was to be done, the colonel of the regiment, tall, brusque, and handsome, entered the room. Mr. Ojalvo rushed forward, both hands extended, and greeted him as an old friend; then, drawing him to the seat of honor on the divan, talked volubly of mutual friends in Constantinople, speaking of himself as the American Consul of Erzerum on his way to Van for a visit.

The colonel hesitated, pretended to recognize the friend who seemed to know him so well (Ojalvo had never seen him before) and, after we had served him with tea, withdrew, calling off his soldiers. Five minutes later, according to the etiquette of the country, Mr. Ojalvo and I returned his call. He was not now our guest, and Mr. Ojalvo inquired a little severely why the soldiers had been stationed about us.

“I was misinformed; I understood you were fugitives from the Government in Erzerum; I beg your forgiveness.” He then told us that for several days no one had traveled over the roads we were to take, but he would give us two hun-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

dred soldiers to march ahead of us and break the road, and if we wished he himself would accompany us. Of course we understood that the proffered companionship was for the sake of surveillance rather than protection.

Just then an orderly entered the room, saluted, and announced that Sheikh Mehmet had come in from Zetekhan with a large train of camels, having spent an entire day, from sunrise to sunset, in traveling twelve miles. We knew that now the road was broken, and, thanking the colonel for his kind offer, told him that we should not need to avail ourselves of it, but would start by moonlight as planned.

By midnight the cold was intense, the stars clear and sparkling. As we drove out through a deep gorge the driver of the sled with the kavasses tipped them off the abrupt bank of a stream on to the newly formed ice; their hands broke through and their mittens were soaked — a serious thing in zero weather. The drivers urged us to turn back lest the kavass's hands freeze, but I loaned one of them my mittens and we proceeded. We reached a Kurdish village soon after daybreak, rested a few hours, and then hired oxen to carry our baggage up the

## IN TURKEY

mountain over which we had to pass, as it was very steep and the snow was quite deep.

At the top we again loaded the sleds, putting trunks and bedding on one sled, seated the two ladies with their backs against the trunks so that they would be shielded from the wind, and began the descent. The horses drawing the ladies' sled rushed down the last steep slope, across the small stream at the bottom of the pass, and leaped to ascend the opposite bank. As they leaped, Mevlute, the driver, turned them a little to the left so that the front of the sled stuck under the bank; he then lashed them fiercely. Knowing that the harness would break if this strain continued, I seized the front of the sled, raised it a little, and the pull of the horses carried it on. It looked as if I had lifted sledge, trunks, ladies, and all, by sheer muscular strength, and the Turkish drivers were filled with a wholesome awe of my powers that was of great value to me later.

On we went. Mehmet next drove his horses off the narrow road, where they floundered up to their necks in the snow. We worked two hours getting them out, unloading and reloading.

Meanwhile Mr. Ojalvo, saying that he would go ahead to Zetekhan and prepare us a place for

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

the night there, took my horse and the zabtieg and left us. Near by was a Kurdish village noted for its robbers. Our drivers turned aside to this village and announced that it was their intention to spend the night there.

"We shall go on to Zetekhan," I announced. They obeyed with very bad grace, and as we crossed a stream on the outskirts of the village Mevlute repeated his performance of the early afternoon. Again I lifted the front of the sled, extricating it. Both drivers then threw their whips to the ground and began to unhitch their horses, saying, "You can stay here if you please; we are going back to the village."

Thereupon I seized Mevlute, whirled him about, and threw him into a snow-bank twelve feet away. I then fastened the traces, mounted the box, and drove off.

"Bring on your sled," I shouted to Akhmet, the British kavass, who, when I looked back, was pushing away his big driver, Mehmet, with the scabbard of his sword.

"Please do not take away my horses," besought Mevlute, overtaking us a moment later, and looking very contrite. "I will behave if you will let me drive them again."

## IN TURKEY

I gave him the reins and he ran beside the sled, whipping the horses into a gallop. All went well for a few moments; then suddenly he gave a yell like an Indian war-whoop and slashed at the horses with all his might. They leaped forward and, crash! went the front of the sled against a rock jutting out of the snow; the whipple-tree snapped, and the horses went free.

“The whipple-tree is broken; we will have to go back to that village for a new one,” said Mevlute, apparently dismayed.

“We will *not*,” I retorted, tying the traces to the runner, and on we went.

As we descended Tahir Pass the sun was setting. We were already in the shadow of the mountain. A long and steep descent made it impossible for the horses to hold back the heavy sleds. They bore it well for a while, then began to trot, and then to run at full speed down the incline which was nearly two miles long. It was dusk as we approached the foot of the mountain.

In the dim light we saw a villager ahead of us and an ox drawing a small sledge. We whistled and gesticulated, and three times the man drove his ox from the path into the soft, deep snow;

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

but as soon as the animal felt his feet sink in the snow he turned stubbornly back.

Seeing that our drivers could not stop their ill-trained horses and that a dangerous collision was imminent, I climbed out on the pole between the leaders, leaped ahead, sprinted for the ox, and putting my shoulder under him heaved him over into the soft snow. Then I snatched up the sledge, pitched it aside, and, stepping out of the way just in time to let our sled pass, jumped on behind.

Soon it was pitch dark. The sky became overclouded and snow began to fall. We were at the foot of the mountain and were making our way across Alashgerd plain. My driver informed me that he could not see the road and begged me to drive and follow him as he walked at the horses' heads and felt for the road with his feet. Both my hands froze and were thawed out by rubbing them with snow.

"Stop, we are lost! We have got off the road," Mevlute called back suddenly.

"In what direction is the village?" I inquired.  
"I know not."

There was but one village within a radius of many miles in that plain. We might travel all

## IN TURKEY

night and not find it. I doubt not that we were all equally earnest in prayer at that moment that God would guide us back to the road. Suddenly we heard dogs barking at a great distance, and, sure of our direction now, we turned at a right angle, following the sound, and before long found ourselves in Zetekhan.

The following day was Sunday and we were determined not to travel on the Sabbath. Shortly after daybreak Mr. Ojalvo, going out of the house, met our drivers leaving with their horses for Karakillissa to telegraph our whereabouts to the police at Erzerum, to whom they had given bond—as we learned later—that they would not take us out of Erzerum without notification. Mr. Ojalvo seized the horses and brought them to our stable. We were quite within our rights in overriding the arbitrary restrictions of minor Turkish officials. British and American citizens were accorded by treaty free right of travel in Turkey, immunity from police interference, and were subject only to consular courts.

Before long the gendarmes and soldiers of Zetekhan were seen to withdraw and the chiefs of the village came to us full of apprehension, begging us to leave. Hatzdur, three miles away,

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

had been pillaged and eighty-five of its people killed by Kurds and gendarmes, ostensibly because some Armenian revolutionists from Russia had spent a night there. It had been reported that we were fugitives from the Government and our presence might be made an excuse for a similar massacre.

We packed our belongings, loaded the sleds, and then found that our drivers had left, taking the harness with them. Fortunately I had purchased a dozen hanks of very small rope in Erzerum, because it was cheaper there than in Van, and with this we made a full set of harness.

During the night a foot and a half of snow had fallen and the road to Hatzdur was unbroken, so it took us the rest of the day to travel the three miles. We spent part of the night listing the names of those who had been killed and getting details of the horrible atrocities. Women had been thrown into the heated clay ovens in the ground, kerosene poured over them and ignited — and worse things had been done.

Here we found some Turkish drivers taking students to the military school in Van, and we engaged them to care for our horses and furnish a whipple-tree.

## IN TURKEY

'As the villagers were destitute we decided to give them assistance in the form of employment. Next day we hired fourteen of the poorest men to tramp ahead of our sleds and so break a road for the horses. Progress was slow. The horses repeatedly slipped from the path into snow so deep that only their heads remained above it, and we were obliged to dig and pack a path by which they might return to the road. They became fagged, but we had a high range to cross with no stopping-place until we should reach the valley beyond, so we could do nothing but push on, the ladies riding, one my horse Nedjib, and the other the gendarme's horse.

Near the top of the pass the way was blocked by a huge drift through which an opening had been cut which was too narrow for the passage of a sled. The horses, moreover, had fallen exhausted; six of them were down, and we feared the leaders might die. We could burden them no further, so, covering the loads in the sleds, we unhitched the horses, and when, after a long wait, we were able to get them on their feet, we led them, leaving the sleds behind.

On the crest of the mountain we found a place, wind-swept and beaten, where wolves had just

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

devoured a horse. Nedjib stepped on the spot softened by the heat of the animal's entrails, crashed through, and fell off the path into the deep snow. His rider and I struggled to get him out, while all the others, including the vice-consul, who was leading Miss Barrows's horse, hastened on to get down to the village in the plain and send us help.

Finally, pulling Nedjib around by his tail and his heels, we succeeded in turning him with his back downhill, and then rolled him over to the next zigzag of the path, where he regained his feet once more.

Just here the path forked, so we turned to the left along the spur of the mountain, having failed to notice that the others of our party had turned to the right. After a while, on glancing down, we saw them, looking like pygmies in the valley below. The snow on this face of the mountain was so beaten by the wind as to have a very firm crust, too slippery to walk upon. Throwing the reins on Nedjib's neck I pointed to the horses below and said to him, "There they are; go down." With a whinny he spread his fore feet forward and, almost sitting down, slid down the mountain-side. We followed, *quite* sitting down,

## 'IN TURKEY

'while our friends below, catching sight of us, roared with laughter.

Once indoors in the little village of Hanik, most of us threw ourselves down where we could, fatigued to the limit of endurance, unable to realize that this was Christmas Day, and almost too tired to care. But Miss Barrows, in spite of her own weariness, was determined that we should celebrate the day in some way, and, knowing that our kind friends in Erzerum had intended we should do so when they had packed our food-box, she brought forth from its depths turkey, plum-pudding, and other goodies, and prepared us a delicious dinner.

We had but just retired for the night when there was a rumble and our beds were shaken to and fro. Old Mother Earth was giving us a hearty shake of congratulation on having got through.

The next day we hired men to go back and bring in our loads. They brought the sleds on their shoulders and with them came our runaway drivers. The vice-consul now insisted that we leave the sleds and travel the rest of the way on horseback, so he turned aside to Tutakh to secure saddle-horses and pack-horses, directing

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

us to await him at Milan, a village just the other side of the Murad Su.

We mistakenly supposed this river was the boundary between Erzerum and Van, and knowing that if captured within the province of Van we must be taken to the Vali of Van, we dismissed anxiety from our minds, as he was a friendly official and Van was our destination anyway. We rested in a Kurdish house at Milan, the men and women crowding in to see the strange foreigners. We were hungry and thirsty, so, having an orange that had been frozen, we peeled and divided it. One of the Kurds held out his hand for a piece; after examining it he passed it on to another and another, until it had been around a large circle and came back looking almost as black as the rafters of the room. Then the first man undertook to taste it, and found it as bitter as wormwood. With an expression of disgust he tossed it into the lap of one of the ladies. A piece of chocolate was passed about in the same way and also tossed into her lap. The women crept up behind her to look at the coils of her long hair, one of them quietly reaching up and giving it a pull. Then they began to examine her garments; one more curious than the others

## IN TURKEY

deliberately ventured investigation beneath her petticoat; this was too much; we drove the intruders from the room.

After two hours Mr. Ojalvo arrived with some pack-horses, but there were not enough saddles, so the kavasses were obliged to use blankets as saddles on the sled horses.

Proceeding to the village of Kios, we found that a few days previously there had been a battle between Yusuf Bey, Kurdish chief and Hamidieh Kaimakam, and his neighbor Hussein Pasha, which had resulted in nineteen wounded men. I dressed their wounds and thus won their friendship, I believe.

In the morning our drivers delayed until we were compelled to call upon the Kaimakam for assistance. By this time it was so late that Mr. Ojalvo, who was very nervous, insisted on our going on, leaving the Turkish kavass and the zabtieh to bring on the load animals later. The Armenian kavass, Sarkis, accompanied us. After traveling perhaps twenty minutes from the village I turned and rode to the top of a slight rise of ground to see if our loads were coming. I heard shouting and saw four men galloping toward us at full speed. When they caught

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

sight of me they lowered the muzzles of their rifles, drew cartridges from their belts, and loaded.

"If that's your game I shall be ready, too," I thought, swinging my Remington rifle from my back and opening my pistol holster.

"Keep together," I called out to the rest of my party; "some men are coming." An instant later, the four men, who proved to be gendarmes, dashed past me, encircled the party, and two of them seized the bridle of the vice-consul's horse.

"Brak!"<sup>1</sup> shouted Sarkis, raising his empty rifle. Immediately three of the gendarmes pounced on him and clubbed him with their guns, paralyzing his right arm; then while one beat him the other two attempted to unseat him — without success, although they tore off both his cartridge and overcoat belts.

"Brak!" I shouted, aiming my as yet unloaded rifle at them. The fourth gendarme, who from a short distance was covering the party, now leveled his rifle at me, but I turned on him so suddenly that he dropped it, startled. Then I wheeled my horse and had the four men in front of me.

<sup>1</sup> Quit.

## IN TURKEY

“Brak, brak!” And I threw a cartridge from the magazine into my rifle barrel and aimed at the officer’s right shoulder. Something in the snap of my voice and the flash of my eye assured them that I meant business and all four drew back and threw up their hands.

“Don’t shoot, Ussher! Don’t shoot, don’t shoot!” called Ojalvo, who had cut for the hills the moment the men had let go of his horse to attack Sarkis. He came down now and acted as interpreter. These men had been sent by the Kaimakam of Tutakh, who had been informed by one of our drivers that we were fugitives from the Government. We must return to Tutakh.

“We will not!” said I.

“Oh, but we must!” exclaimed Ojalvo.

“We will not! They are in our power now, not we in theirs.” Then I remarked to him that we must go back to Kiosk to get our baggage which had been seized there and he, unwisely, perhaps, explained this to the gendarmes.

“Oh, very good! Go back to Kiosk and wait there and we will let you go unmolested, if further orders do not come to us within an hour.”

“We will not ask your permission to proceed.”

In Kiosk we found that the loads had been re-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

moved from our animals, and while our men reloaded them I took the ladies to the house where we had spent the night, then went to the house of the Kurdish Kaimakam, whither Mr. Ojalvo had preceded me. Yusef Bey, feeling very important because the American Consul was begging the favor of being allowed to go on, was sitting up very straight and dignified and repeating, "Impossible, impossible."

Drawing my notebook from my pocket I demanded the names of the men who had stopped us, whereupon all four of them bolted for the door.

"Close that door!" I shouted, and insisted on having their names.

"We are going on," I said to Yusef Bey. "If any one stops us he will do so at his peril, and if anything happens to the ladies as a consequence of to-day's excitement I shall hold you personally responsible."

The pompous Kaimakam shriveled up, looking anxiously from one to another of his men.

Just at that moment in walked a fifth gendarme, who saluted and said, "Let the Americans go on." We learned later that the Kaimakam of Tutakh, hearing that we were fleeing from the

## IN TURKEY

Government, had sent the four gendarmes to stop us and had at the same time telegraphed to Erzerum for instructions. The Vali of Erzerum had replied, "Do not interfere with the consuls"; so the fifth man was sent post-haste with the message.

We went on. At Ardjish our zabtieh left us, and, insulted at receiving the amount of but a half-month's salary for a baksheesh when he had hoped for as much as two or three months' pay, went to the local police and informed them that we were fugitives from the Government. They came in haste to prevent our further escape.

Mr. Ojalvo routed the Kaimakam out of bed at four o'clock in the morning to demand that proper courtesy be shown him. The Kaimakam was so incensed at his officials having failed to inform him of the presence of the Honorable American Consul that he routed them out of bed also, imprisoned the zabtieh who had occasioned the insult, and ordered his police to show us every courtesy and provide every facility for our journey.

It was Saturday morning and we were eighteen hours from the city of Van. The ladies were anxious not to have to spend another night in a village, so we rested two hours at the head of

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Lake Van, breakfasted, traveled four hours more, rested another four, and then pressed on. We were so desperately weary and so nearly frozen when we reached Cochani that we felt we must turn in. Our poor, tired steeds dropped asleep on their feet as they waited, while we, dismounting, went from door to door, seeking a place in which to spend the night. We were finally shown into a windowless stable with a raised earthen platform ten feet square, where was a fireplace on which dried manure was burning. We dropped down on the uncarpeted floor of this platform and were soon sound asleep. A few hours later we awoke with a start, feeling nearly suffocated. The chimney had been closed to keep out the cold and the many animals in the stable had exhausted the oxygen. We had to get out.

The next village was full of soldiers who had captured Emin Pasha, a noted Kurd, and were taking him prisoner to Van. There was no other place to stop, so we went on, hoping to slip into Van unobserved while the people were at church, and earnestly trusting that they would not be shocked at our having traveled on Sunday. But when we arrived at the gate of the mission com-

## **IN TURKEY**

pound a small boy who saw us, and who knew how anxiously we were awaited, ran into the church in the middle of Dr. Raynolds's sermon, shouting, "They have come, they have come!" Out rushed the congregation to greet us with unrestrained demonstrations of joy. We were at home at last.

## CHAPTER V

### WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED

MISS ELIZABETH BARROWS and I were married on the 26th of the following June. It was the first American wedding to take place in Van. For diplomatic reasons and because of our relation to the entire community it was deemed advisable to invite to it the Vali, the Turkish officials, the most prominent Turks and Armenians, and all the members of our Protestant congregation. Several hundred were present. Miss Barrows, gowned in simple white muslin, was given away by Major Maunsell, the British Vice-Consul. The simple and beautiful Episcopal service so pleased the Armenians present that we had to translate it into their language and thereafter it became the accepted form for Protestant marriages in Van.

Our guests made elaborate speeches of congratulations and good wishes, and then came tea, cakes, and fruit, of which our many orphans had a share—it was a gala day for them.

## IN TURKEY

My wife was the daughter of a missionary, the Reverend John O. Barrows. Her birthplace was Cesarea, Turkey, and her home had been in Turkey for the first seven years of her life. Then, on account of the delicate health of her brother, the family settled in New England. She attended Northfield Seminary and the Woman's College of Baltimore—now Goucher College—in which she was president of her class during both her junior and senior years, and on her graduation was made life president. A schoolmate has written of her: "The first characteristic which impressed me was her absolute sincerity. Another characteristic was her serenity of spirit and her sweetness which was never insipidity. Behind it appeared character, unyielding in its integrity, a quiet firmness where principle was involved which nothing could move. Her missionary spirit was as a beautiful radiance that illuminated her personality."

For nearly a year after our marriage she continued full work in the girls' school, until some one was sent out and became fitted to take over its management. Nearly every year thereafter she taught in one or another of the schools, teaching Biblical literature to theological students for a

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

time, and also to our first college class a number of years later, besides other subjects in the high schools. Her keen intellect, her zest for knowledge and research, her rich stores of original thought stimulated, inspired, and deeply influenced her pupils.

She was a very efficient housekeeper. "A true daughter of New England, the spotlessness and order of her home testified to her unrivaled ability as a home-maker." She taught our children herself, and daily, in the later years of our life in Van, a little school held session in my study. Three small home-made desks were set out in order each morning, and the mother went from one to another hearing now a primer lesson, now a recitation in history, and again making clear the mysteries of fractions or of compound interest, or giving a little lecture in botany, physiology, or history of art.

She was one of the organizers of a Y.W.C.A. in Van; indefatigable in visiting in the homes of the women, advising them in the care of their children, helping them with her sympathy and in many practical ways. Face to face with the problem of relieving some of the bitter poverty about her, she evolved a scheme to solve it. She

## IN TURKEY

gathered a hundred widows and orphan girls who had no means of support, employed a lace-maker to teach them how to make lace, imported from Ireland much better and finer thread than had ever been used for this purpose in Van, bought the completed lace from each worker at a price that afforded a living wage, and then sent it by mail to dealers or to friends in America and England to be sold. This continued to be a self-supporting industry for years.

When I went to Van I found Dr. and Mrs. Raynolds managing an orphanage of four hundred children left destitute by the massacres of 1895 and 1896. Dr. Raynolds had interested friends in America, Switzerland, Germany, and England who provided for its maintenance. I cannot do better than to quote right here from a letter written to his Board by the Presbyterian missionary, Mr. Coan, the week before I arrived:—

It has been a great privilege to see the wonderful work which is being carried on here by these two giants, Dr. Raynolds and his wife. Think of a man as at once station treasurer, distributing relief all over the plain, and keeping the accounts involved and sending the reports that are required; keeping up preaching services in two places, four miles apart;

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

superintending the care of five hundred orphans and four hundred day pupils, the five hundred not only cared for physically, but so taught and utilized in part as to pay their own expenses. For example, there are trades taught and half the day is given to trades and half to study. All the cloth used is woven by the children in the looms in the place; the skins of the oxen and sheep eaten are cured on the place, and boys make them up into shoes of three grades. Carpentry and blacksmithing are also done. All the food needed is prepared on the place, thus training up another corps as bakers and cooks. So you have every day on the place, being taught how to live useful Christian lives, more than five hundred children. Then add to all of the above the medical work here, to which three afternoons are given, and you have at least a part of the duties of this couple. Alone, without associates, they have carried all these burdens, until it is a wonder that they are not broken down.

The burden of the orphanage became too great for them to carry unaided, and first, the Friends of Armenia in England sent Miss Wilson to help them, and when she left in 1901 the German Committee, which had assumed the support of most of the orphans, sent out Herr Roessler, a Swiss gentleman. He was succeeded by Fräulein Pauline Patrunky, a delightful little German lady who won the hearts of all. The German Committee steadily increased the number of or-



MRS RAYNOLDS AND SUNDAY-SCHOOL CLASS AT ARTAMID CAMP



DESTITUTE



## IN TURKEY

phans it supported; in all over a thousand were cared for.

When Dr. Raynolds returned from his furlough in 1905 he was accompanied to Van by Herr Spörri and his family, Anna Wachter, Pastor Lohman, Secretary of the Deutsches Hülfbund, and Mr. Favre, representative of the Swiss Committee. Pastor Lohman negotiated the transfer of the orphanage work to the care of the Germans. The agreement was that the children should be sent to the American schools and that, for the sake of mission polity and to avoid rivalry and unchristian competition in the Lord's work, the Germans should not undertake independent educational or evangelistic work in our mission district. They and we were to have a uniform salary schedule for our native assistants, and when their orphans were educated we were to employ them, if suitable, as teachers and evangelists. Our medical department was to continue its care of the health of these children; their Schwester Clara Liese was permitted to act as superintendent of our hospital and we highly appreciated her services.

Naturally, during the first years this was an ideal arrangement for the Germans, for they

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

were able to give all their attention to the physical care of the orphans. Soon, however, they felt the need of broadening their work and started schools, first in the orphanage, and then in the villages. When they began to draw away our teachers by offering higher salaries than those stipulated in the schedule we reminded them of their contract. "Oh," was their naive reply, "you cannot expect us to keep that agreement now that it is no longer to our advantage." So it became a "scrap of paper."

When my wife relinquished the superintendence of the girls' school, Miss Grisell McLaren, a Mount Holyoke graduate, took her place. Miss Susan Norton came a year later to take charge of the kindergartens. She was married in 1908 to the Reverend Charles Sterritt, of the Urumiah Mission. In 1907, when Miss McLaren returned to this country on furlough, Miss E. Gertrude Rogers, of New Britain, Connecticut, a classmate of hers at Mount Holyoke College, came out to Van. She was a sister of D. Miner Rogers, who was shot during the Adana massacre in 1909. She became principal of the girls' high schools and the intermediate grades of the grammar schools in "The Gardens" and in

## IN TURKEY

the walled city, while Miss Caroline Silliman, daughter of the late Senator Silliman, of Connecticut, took charge of the primary departments and kindergartens. Miss McLaren, on her return, became our touring missionary, superintending our schools in the villages and organizing and superintending the work for women there.

Meanwhile, in 1904, the Reverend and Mrs. E. A. Yarrow came out to Van. Mr. Yarrow, who was a graduate of Wesleyan, took charge of the boys' schools and became treasurer of the station. He superintended the construction work of our growing plant; a carpenter's shop on our premises was kept constantly busy, and he modernized and improved its methods. We all had some share in the general work of the station besides the responsibility of our own departments, we three men preaching in turn in one of the two evangelical churches of the city, and all of us taking part in the work of the Sunday Schools and of the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. which were organized after the Turkish Revolution put an end to the old régime in which no societies of any sort were tolerated. We all shared the social duties which were an important part of our work.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Each member of the station had a vote and no policy or action was decided on without free and full discussion.

Missionaries are human and very full of faults, and the most successful and efficient usually have strong wills and dominating personalities. They need, more than others, great tolerance, patience, and forbearance if friction and dissensions are to be avoided under the difficult conditions of their isolated life. These qualities the members of the Van station possessed in large measure, and we worked together in perfect harmony.

Our work grew until we had eleven hundred school-children in the buildings on our compound, besides the schools in the walled city and a kindergarten for Turkish children. Our buildings had to grow, too, and within recent years two large new schoolhouses, one for boys and one for girls, were erected on our premises. Dr. Raynolds built a good-sized church with the money paid him by the Ottoman Government as indemnity for the injuries he had received from Musa Bey in the attack I have described in the third chapter—an indemnity paid nineteen years after the incident. He was fond of referring to it as “the church the Kurds built.”

## IN TURKEY

Proselytizing was not the object of our labors. But the Gregorian Church had become very corrupt early in its history, its priesthood was ignorant and lax, and the Bible, written in a language which had long been obsolete, was a sealed book to the mass of the people. Baptism and the sacraments were considered the essentials of religion — *not* the living of a holy life. The aim of American missions was to purify the Gregorian Church, educate the priesthood and the people, and, by giving them a Bible translated into modern speech, help them to become Christians in reality as well as in name.

## CHAPTER VI

### MY HOSPITAL

SOON after my return from that momentous trip to Erzerum, the story of which I have told in the fourth chapter, I hired a private house not far from the mission premises and had some alterations made fitting it for hospital purposes. The only place available for an operating-room was a long closet five and one half feet wide by twelve feet long. As this was on the second floor, we were able to put a skylight in the earth roof and enlarge a window at the end of the closet. It was so narrow that we could not turn the patient around without taking patient and table into the hallway, which was wider. Our equipment, too, at this time was quite primitive.

Our first hospital patient came to us before we were ready. I was examining some one in my consulting-room when there was a violent pounding on the door, and the shout, "Come out quick, Doctor. There is a man dead on the waiting-room floor." Hurrying out, I found a vil-

. [ 80 ]

## IN TURKEY

lager of perhaps twenty-two years of age with neither heart-beat nor respiration on the left side of his thorax, which bulged very markedly. The contracted pupils showed that he was not yet dead, and further examination revealed his heart and lungs forced by an enormous pleural abscess into the right upper quadrant of his chest. As quickly as possible we put him on a stretcher and hurried him to the hospital, sending a boy to snatch a quilt for his bed from my own couch. In great haste we tore off his clothing, sterilized his side with alcohol, opened his thorax, and a stream of pus under tremendous pressure spurted to the ceiling. He began to breathe again and eventually recovered. During his convalescence, he was converted. He took a Bible with him to his home in Hundistan, which was perhaps the most fanatical Gregorian village in our field. Repeatedly its inhabitants had declared that if any missionary or any Protestant should enter their village they would stone him out, and they meant it. As a result of the conversion of this young man, however, they later asked us to help them start a school of their own and send them a teacher.

The recovery of the young man was thought  
[ 81 ]

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

to be a miracle. It was said that a man had died and the doctor had resurrected him. So our fame spread widely among the villages, but of the people in the city none would venture to come to our hospital, which was a new and untried thing to them; fanatical Gregorians, antagonistic to the "Protes," told people that if they came we would cut them up to get their eyes and liver and brain to use in making medicine.

Finally a filthy and destitute beggar was found lying in the street, dying of pneumonia. The Turks have no benevolent institutions, nor had the Armenians of this region. In Turkey hospitality is a religious duty, and it is expected that the stranger will be cared for, but this man was so loathsome that all "passed by on the other side." The city fathers met and decided that it was a disgrace to the city to have any one dying uncared for in the street, and yet no one was willing to open his home to him. Then some one suggested that he might be sent to the new American hospital, that he was "dead" anyway, and as his death was assured, it would not be wronging him to send him to the American hospital. This, too, would relieve the city of the mortification of seeing a sick man dying in the street.

## IN TURKEY

Through God's mercy the patient recovered. He was well known, and the eyes of all were turned upon our hospital. The following week the performance was repeated in the case of a female beggar, aged and infirm, who also was dying of pneumonia. People said that the doctor had raised her, too, from the dead; and now that three dead people had been resurrected and some operations for stone had been successfully performed in private houses, the physician's reputation was established, and our hospital began to fill up.

Our lease was for three years, but it was soon evident that we should need a larger structure. Twelve patients and the nurses were all that we could accommodate in the rented house. Dr. Raynolds offered to lend some of his indemnity which would make possible the erection of a building without a grant from the Mission Board, which did not as yet believe in medical missions.

But the Turkish Government was an adept in blocking the benevolent efforts of American missionaries. We had been given to understand, by our embassy, that it would not be possible to secure the permission for the erection of

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

a hospital. The Vali of Van was a broad-minded and friendly man, however.

Just at that time there was friction between the French and Ottoman Governments over the failure of the latter to pay for the erection by French capitalists of the quays in Constantinople. France seized the island of Mitylene and held it until the accounts were paid and a satisfactory treaty negotiated. One of the stipulations of this treaty was that in the event of the religious orders desiring to build or repair benevolent institutions, if valid objections were not made by the Ottoman Government within six months from the date of application, the desired permission should be considered granted without further formalities. America's treaty with Turkey contained a clause granting to Americans all rights and favors granted by the Ottoman Government to the most favored nation. So, after deciding when it would be best to begin construction, we made application six months previously to the Vali. Plans were drawn and forwarded by him to Constantinople. We received no reply nor acknowledgment of the receipt of our request, with the exception that an inquiry regarding us was directed to the British Vice-Consul. At the

## IN TURKEY

expiration of the six months, and during my second year at Van, I wrote a letter to the Vali, notifying him that as I had made application for a permit to build a hospital six months previously and no objection had been raised by the Ottoman Government, we should consider the permission granted, according to the Mitylene agreement and the "favored nation" clause in our American treaty, and should forthwith begin construction. We obtained a local permit to erect a building without a stipulation as to what it was to be. The Turkish municipal physician, Fehty Bey, was jealous of our success, and complained to Constantinople that Dr. Ussher, an American 'doctor, was building a hospital without Government permit. An inspector was sent from Constantinople to examine into the matter. He and Fehty Bey came together to view the structure and were overheard to say, "We will let them go on until they get ready to put on the roof, and then stop them, so they will lose the more and become bankrupt."

It might be well to explain here that Turkish law allows the Government to stop construction of any building until the roof is on. Once the roof is on, the proprietor may finish unmolested.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

'Adobe is very stable if protected by mixed straw and mud plaster, but in wet weather melts down rapidly if unprotected. Hence forbidding a workman to work upon the building just before the roof was put on would mean the destruction of the whole in a single winter.

Our building progressed until one Thursday afternoon, as we were erecting the roof timbers, the inspector and Fehty Bey again put in an appearance, and the former was heard to remark, "They have about ten days' work to get that roof on; Saturday I will start the machinery going to stop them." That night our master workman and I secured some forty workmen and rigged up a derrick to hoist tiles. Friday is the Mohammedian's holiday, and the Ottoman Government does no business on that day. By Friday night the roof was completed, much to the chagrin of the inspector, who had waited about Van for more than two months anticipating the fun of seeing us lose our building.

Nothing further could be done by him or by Fehty Bey until the structure should be occupied. As soon as we moved in the patients from the leased house, word was sent to Constantinople by the municipal physician that Dr.

## IN TURKEY

Ussher was conducting a hospital in a new building without permission. Orders came from Constantinople to close it. The Vali, whose family physician I had been for some time, not wishing me to be embarrassed more than was necessary, allowed me to be informed of this peremptory order before the police were sent to execute it. Upon receipt of the news I repaired to his house and asked him if it were true.

“Yes.”

“You, I know, are acting simply under orders, and not because it is your desire to close the hospital, which you acknowledge is valuable and necessary to the people, so I shall understand that whatever you do is not done with any animosity toward me personally and it will not affect our friendship in the slightest.”

He expressed his kind approval of my attitude and assured me that he regretted very much the order to close the hospital.

“I hope,” I continued, “you will understand that anything I shall do counter to your official orders will not be directed against you personally and should not lessen your friendship for me. If the police are sent to close the hospital, I will

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

resist, and if they choose to use force in American premises and so raise an international question, ‘Bouyuniz effendim.’”<sup>1</sup> This was reported to Constantinople as my reply and there was no more opposition.

We moved into the new building in 1903. I think it was in 1904 that Professor J. Rendle Harris, of Cambridge University, England, visited us. One morning before breakfast he said to Dr. Raynolds, “Now say, ‘For what we are about to receive the Lord make us truly thankful’”; and after grace he pushed across the table a check for three hundred pounds for the hospital to repay what Dr. Raynolds had loaned me. The rest of the cost I met out of the receipts of the medical department; out of these receipts I paid for many enlargements and improvements later, and paid the salaries of my nurses, drug-gists, and other employees. Gifts from friends met part of the expense of many free patients.

A friend of Professor Harris’s sent us forty-eight hospital beds which proved a great novelty and attraction, and sometimes patients would amuse themselves while lying full length on these

<sup>1</sup> “Help yourself”; i. e., “Whatever trouble comes of it you will have made it for yourself.”



THE HOSPITAL AT VAN



THE HOSPITAL AFTER THE BOMBARDMENT



## IN TURKEY

by bouncing up and down on the springs half an hour at a time.

In the fall of 1904 we learned that there was disease among the soldiers, of which the symptoms were diarrhoea, vomiting, cramps, and the turning black of their bodies. These symptoms are characteristic of Asiatic cholera, so I inquired of the Vali whether there was cholera among the soldiers and requested — if it were so — that precautions be taken to protect the people. The Turkish doctors very indignantly denied the existence of cholera, and, it seems, called it “bronchitis malaria.” A few days later it was reported that twenty soldiers were dying daily in a certain barracks, and again I approached the Vali. Again jealous military physicians were indignant at the suggestion that there might be cholera among their soldiers. But the following Sunday I was called to see an Armenian who had handled some bread given him by a soldier. His symptoms were very distinctly those of Asiatic cholera and within three hours from the beginning of his attack he was dead. I reported to the Vali that an Armenian had died with symptoms which indicated Asiatic cholera and I would confirm my diagnosis by a microscopical examina-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

tion. The Turkish police and physicians came at once to the house, removed the body, and forbade my approaching it.

That evening another young man, who had formerly been a nurse in our hospital, was taken sick. When the people in the house in which he was living heard that it was cholera, even his sister, who had promised to stay by him, fled and left him, and when I went to the house the following morning I found him lying dead alone. The Gregorian Church sextons and undertakers refused to touch the body. I performed an autopsy and took cultures direct from the intestine that proved to be the spirillum of Asiatic cholera, and I so reported to the Vali. He in turn reported to Constantinople and requested that I go through the large military barracks and see what disease was raging there. The Turkish physicians pretended that they, too, desired this, but I noticed that messengers were sent in haste ahead of us. As I was being taken into the reception-room, from which I would be unable to see any of the surroundings, I noticed bearers hurrying a corpse across the courtyard. Turning aside to examine it I found the man had died under the influence of opium, and as the body

## IN TURKEY

was still hot, had undoubtedly died of cholera. We found in the first ward which we visited thirteen new cases, and throughout the barracks more than four hundred in various stages of the disease, many of them with the so-called cholera typhoid.

On our return to the Vali he inquired first of the Turkish doctors whether there was any cholera and their reply was, "Biz boulamaduk." (We could not find it.) Of course, much as I wanted to retain the friendship of my medical colleagues, I could not acquiesce in such a mis-statement. My word was taken against theirs and a corps of physicians was sent from Constantinople to combat the disease.

During the first week of the epidemic among the general populace it was so virulent that nearly every stricken person died. I was not accustomed to losing patients at such a rate and, feeling terribly grieved about it, was searching my books at midnight for some further suggestion as to treatment, when, finding nothing more than what I already knew, discouraged, I went to the Source of wisdom and fell on my knees. Then my eye lighted on an old copy of Sajous's "Medical Journal" on the bottom shelf of the bookcase, un-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

til that moment out of the range of my vision. There were all the volumes for 1896 and 1897, and, when I rose from my knees, I seized the first one that came to hand and found a mention of cholera in it and a report by Dr. Fullerton of Columbus, Ohio, regarding the use of quinine in cholera. The notice consisted of but about ten lines, but, the suggestion was valuable. Koch, of Berlin, had discovered that quinine in solution would inhibit the growth of the cholera germ. Drs. Fullerton and Graham, of Columbus, Ohio, had demonstrated in laboratory experiments that a one two-thousandths solution of sulphate of quinine would kill the cholera germ in twenty minutes. I used it, giving ten grains every hour for four doses, and from that time lost no more cases.

The colonel of one of the regiments, hearing of our success among the people and in our own cholera hospital, offered to turn his barracks over to me and to carry out any instructions I should give. He was losing twenty men a day from his command and the disease was spreading rapidly. I found that cases of malaria and pneumonia were being put into beds in which cholera patients had died and, very naturally, these patients

## IN TURKEY

promptly developed cholera. We burned the infected beds, washed the barracks with one forty thousandth copper sulphate solution, gave aromatic sulphuric acid "lemonade" to all the soldiers, sick and well, and quinine to those who were infected, and in two days the epidemic was wiped out in that barracks. This persuaded the other doctors to try our treatment, which they had decried. When the commission arrived from Constantinople its members implored us to show them a single case of cholera, but not one was to be found. The only precaution taken among the citizens was the putting of perforated copper plates in all the water-courses, copper in even the most minute proportions being deadly to the cholera germs, and to those whose wells were infected we gave small packages of copper sulphate to be dissolved in the well. In spite of the failure of many people to boil the water used, these means rapidly cleared the city of cholera. The commission of physicians sent from Constantinople—who did not see a single case of cholera—were raised in rank and decorated "for having stopped the epidemic." I was told that I might have a decoration if I would give a fitting present to the Vali, which I did not do.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

The following year (1905) there was an epidemic of typhus in Van. Overcrowding, due to the impoverishment of the people by heavy and unjustly collected taxes, was responsible for its rapid spread. Fräulein Patrunky, at the time in charge of our orphanage during Dr. Raynolds's furlough, contracted the disease from some newly received orphans, and died of an abscess in the brain. Shortly before her death I was told by the nurses that five orphan girls were also dying. In agony of mind I went to my house and flung myself on my knees to pray for guidance. As clearly as if some one had spoken the words aloud came to my mind the suggestion, "Use calcium sulphide." I immediately gave the necessary orders to my nurses and within twenty-four hours the sick girls were convalescent. I then gave the calcium sulphide to a number of other typhus patients in the hospital, and those thus treated were convalescent in twenty-four hours. After that I used it for my outside patients with great success.

Smallpox was ever with us, though much lessened in its frequency by vaccination. I treated the cases to saturation with calcium sulphide, and after saturation they became apparently

## IN TURKEY

non-infectious and were convalescent within four days.

Alone out there and thrown upon my own resources, I had to make independent discoveries, originate methods of treatment, assume all responsibility. There was no other physician with whom I could consult. My hospital was for several years the only civil hospital in a territory as large as New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New England combined. Later Dr. Underwood in Erzerum turned part of his own house into a hospital, and yet later the Annie Tracy Riggs Hospital was built in Harput.

Patients came from distant villages and towns on foot, in litters, in ox-carts, and even pick-a-back. The records of a recent year show 927 in-patients, 517 out-patients treated at the hospital 5800 times, over 250 operations performed, 1800 individuals prescribed for or treated at the dispensary thousands of times, and 2216 visited in their homes, sometimes at great distances.

The first four years of my work in Van I not only trained my own nurses, but, having no superintendent, had to oversee their work myself. They required constant watching and following up, for it is hard to make Orientals understand

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

the necessity of strict obedience, absolute accuracy, surgical cleanliness, and attention to the minutest details—nothing in their upbringing or tradition teaches them this.

It was a great relief when in 1904 the Deutches Hülfsbund permitted Schwester Clara Liese, a German deaconess, to take up her abode in our hospital as superintendent. She was with us until we left for our furlough in 1908. When we returned in 1909 we persuaded Miss Louise Bond, an English nurse in Cork, Ireland, to return with us. The following year we started a regular training class for nurses, giving tri-weekly lectures, and in the spring of 1912 we gave our first hospital exhibition before a large audience, containing many Turkish officials. The nurses demonstrated the making of beds, the bathing of patients in bed, the treatment of fractures, the treatment of wounds, the aseptic and anti-septic technique of preparation for an operation, ending with a mock amputation. The audience held its breath in horror when the operator plunged his knife into the patient's leg, gave a sigh of relief and burst into a laugh when saw-dust flowed instead of blood. The exhibition was a revelation and an education. Many who

## IN TURKEY

had opposed nursing as a vocation for women changed their minds. Others lost their ignorant fear of what went on within hospital walls.

Two years later we gave an exhibition of Red Cross First Aid which taught the public much-needed lessons. Several instances of the putting into practice of some of these lessons came to my knowledge later.

Our work for souls in the hospital was never what I would have liked it to be, but it was fruitful and perhaps not less so than other branches of the service. We tried to make it a point to give every one who entered the hospital an opportunity to know the principles of Christianity. Sometimes patients would come in who suspected that this was our aim and determined not to give us a chance. We had, of course, morning and evening devotions in the wards — a hymn, Scripture reading, and prayer. Some of the objectors would stop their ears so as not to hear the Scripture or the hymn, but after a few days they would notice how interested their companions were and curiosity would get the better of them. They would listen a little at first, then hearing nothing against their religion would cease to stop their ears. Soon they would try to join in the

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

singing, and would perhaps ask for a hymn which had been sung before or begin to discuss what had been read. There were times when we had reason to believe that every patient in the hospital had definitely accepted Christ as his Saviour and Lord.

No operation was begun without prayer. Many a patient coming into the operating-room terror-stricken at the thought of the ordeal before him has been quieted and profoundly impressed by this prayer and has said to me afterward, "It changed me."

One particularly foul-mouthed and blatant infidel came for an operation; he cursed the nurses, refused every offer of reading-matter connected with religion, and was very abusive of the Bible and the Church. I took no apparent notice of his tirades. He was in a private room and there was a Bible on his table; one day, after the operation, I picked up the book, opened it at the fifth chapter of Matthew and showing him the first six verses asked what he thought of them. He thought them "fine"! Then I selected another passage. He read it with interest and asked if he might have the book for a while.

"But you don't want to read it, do you?"

## **IN TURKEY**

“Yes, that is the best thing I have read in a long time. What *is* the book?”

“The book against which you have been railing—that you said was all bosh and hypocrisy. It is a Bible.”

“No! I didn’t know there were things like that in the Bible. I never saw a Bible to read it before. May I borrow it for a few days?”

From that day all his spare time was spent poring over the Bible. When he was well enough to leave the hospital he begged to be permitted to stay three days longer (at his own charges in a private room) in order that he might finish the New Testament. He said, “When I get out I know I shall not have much time for reading.” I never heard another curse or foul word from his mouth. During the siege of Van he did heroic work in the trenches.

Mohammedans especially were profoundly interested in the Bible. We would allow them to compare it with a Turkish translation of the Koran, and the comparison was always, in their minds, much to the advantage of the Bible.

One Turkish officer convalescing from typhus wrote on the fly-leaf of the large Turkish Bible belonging to the ward that he had read this book,

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

had been greatly helped by it, hereby recommended it to the careful reading of any other Moslems who might come to the hospital, and prayed Allah that they might while there be helped as much physically and spiritually as he had been. He signed this with his full name and rank and regiment. On departing he purchased and took with him two copies of the Testament. From that day nearly every Turkish officer who spent a week or more in our hospital signed on that page his testimony confirming what Akhmet Bey had said.

Many of our Turkish soldiers could not read, but enjoyed *hearing* the Scriptures and went home with changed ideas about Christianity and Christians.

Turkish homes and harems in Van not open to other Christianizing influences were open to the American physician, whom they trusted absolutely, thanks to the long and true life of Dr. Raynolds among them; I was especially in demand as an obstetrician in difficult cases.

I never hesitated to present the claims of Christ to Turks, Kurds, or Arabs where opportunity offered, but made no effort to proselytize and never spoke slightlyingly of their religion, for I

## **IN TURKEY**

felt that if their own hearts did not tell them that what I offered was higher and purer and more satisfying than Islam, it would be useless to take away their faith in what they had. In my seventeen years in Turkey I have never had a rebuff from a Moslem to whom I addressed religious conversation. Islam is the State religion of Turkey and to renounce "the faith" is treason against the State and so punishable with death. For this reason, though Christianity has made a great impression on the Moslems of Turkey, few individuals have dared to renounce Islam publicly. Many have delayed a public profession, hoping to be able to win their families to Christ. I have known several who were compelled to flee the country immediately after such a profession of Christ, while their relatives were subjected to most harrowing tests of their loyalty to Islam.

## CHAPTER VII

### 'A PHYSICIAN-AT-LARGE'

I WAS often obliged to leave my hospital and my practice in Van to attend missionaries in other cities, for there were not enough missionary physicians to go around and very few competent native physicians in our part of the country. In Bitlis, the mission station nearest us, there was never, during my sixteen years in Van, even a fairly good native doctor, so I was summoned thither in haste many a time.

When there I always held a daily clinic, for our doors would be besieged by those whose only chance of securing a physician's aid was afforded by my occasional visits. Here would be a man who would have gone blind in a short time had I not happened that way; there another who had been disabled and suffering intensely for months, whom a simple operation would restore to health; here again, a mother with a baby in her arms which would waste away and die unless helped. People who live in a country where

## IN TURKEY

physicians, hospitals, and free clinics are plentiful cannot realize what an immense amount of suffering goes unrelieved in Oriental countries, how many hundreds of thousands of children die or become cripples, imbecile, or blind because no aid is at hand. My heart has often ached as I have looked on the crowds who always gathered around me at every stopping-place in my journeys, and have realized how many sufferers were beyond my reach who could get no other succor.

My professional trips were undertaken at all times of the year and I had many queer experiences traveling over the vile Turkish roads in winter or early spring.

Three months after the journey from Erzerum to Van, described in the fourth chapter, I was called upon to go over that road again. The farther north we traveled the deeper became the snow and slush; small streams were swollen to dangerous torrents; I kept dry while fording one of these by standing on my islanded saddle, clinging to the pommel to keep my balance.

When we came to the Murad Su we met a group of Turkish officials, who had tried vainly for eight hours to persuade the officials on the other side to bring out the Government raft and

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

ferry them across. They informed us that the river had risen suddenly about twenty feet that morning and was absolutely impassable. They tried to persuade me to turn back with them and take a much longer road which crossed the river by a bridge, but I had visions of a little angel coming to the world on schedule time, with no one there to do the honors should I be a day late, so determined to push on, remembering the promise, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

"We shall probably have to swim the river," I said to my zabtieh.

"But I can't swim."

"In that case you will have to ride your horse into the river until it reaches the saddle, then slip off, and, holding by the strap of the saddle, let him pull you across."

"Just as you say, Doctor Bey. I will do whatever you order."

When we reached the brink of the river, however, we saw men on the other side getting ready the Government raft, which was made of poles tied together and fastened to a dozen inflated goatskins.

## IN TURKEY

“Wait, my lord, wait, and we will bring you across,” they shouted.

On coming over they treated me with the utmost respect and would not even let me lead my own horse.

“No, no, my lord; we will take you across and then return for the horse and zabtieh.”

But when they attempted to lead Nedjib into the rushing torrent he would not follow, and when they raised a stick to drive him in he hunched himself menacingly.

“Let go of him!” I shouted.

They feared he might run if they did so, but finally obeyed.

“Come, Nedjib, come and get a lump of sugar,” I called.

He pricked up his ears, looked across the river at me, and, plunging in, swam straight and strong. One of the men snatched at his halter chain, all jumped on the raft, and he towed them halfway across the river, when the man holding the chain had to let go or be pulled in. Nedjib swam fast, but was swept by the current a hundred yards below us. On landing he came straight to me.

“Mashallah! What a horse!” exclaimed the Turks. They would not permit me to fee the

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

men who had poled the raft nor to wait on myself in any way. I was conducted to a café, a servant removed my muddy top-boots, and, much to my annoyance, washed them inside as well as out at the fountain.

This was Tutakh, from which the gendarmes had been sent to Kiosk to stop us on that memorable journey from Erzerum the previous December. That evening a group of officers came to call on me, though they should have been feasting at the end of the day's fast, it being the month of Ramazan. They wanted to know if I would call on the Kaimakam.

“No, I think not.”

“We beg of you to do so. Pray forgive him.”

“Forgive him for what?”

“Are you not the American Consul?”

“No, I am the American doctor from Van.”

The look of relief and withal disgust on their faces was amusing, and then I learned why I had been ferried across when the Turkish officials had pleaded in vain. An officer had been watching the latter through a telescope as they had retreated from the river-bank, saw them meet me on the crest of the hill, noticed my helmet, and exclaimed: “There is that American Consul

## IN TURKEY

whom we insulted so a few months ago. Now he will make us pay for it." They held council with the Kaimakam and decided that they would treat the consul with every honor and perhaps he would relent and forgive them. I was offered no more special courtesies and no gendarmes to guide me. My zabtieh, Suleiman, did not know the road beyond this place, but we were told that it was plain and there was no chance of going astray.

The snow was very deep and melting underneath. The beaten path was firm enough to hold the horses most of the time, but when they did break through, the stiff crust nearly shaved their legs, drawing blood, and so gripped them about the upper leg that it was extremely difficult to extricate them.

At one place I was suddenly brought up short on the edge of a crevasse about twelve feet deep and five feet across. Fearing that if I took the leap on Nedjib's back our combined weight would cause a cave-in and precipitate us to the bottom, I backed him off, dismounted, and with a running leap cleared the chasm; then called Nedjib and he followed suit.

At the top of Kilidge Gedik, or Sword Pass,

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

eight thousand feet in altitude, Suleiman's horse got off into the deep snow and thrashed about until exhausted. Every time we tried to guide him to the path some frantic plunge would throw him back. The high altitude taxed our hearts severely, and after an hour and a half of struggle we were limp.

"Let me cut his throat and leave him," begged Suleiman.

"No, I would n't cut *my* horse's throat and I won't permit you to."

Suleiman spread his coat for a prayer mat on the snow and began his noonday *namaz*. I, too, was praying that God would help us out. It may have been Suleiman's prayer mat that suggested it, but as soon as he rose from his knees the same thought seemed to strike us both, and spreading our coats, blankets, and waterproofs on the snow, we dragged the discouraged horse around by tail and heels until his back was turned downhill, rolled him over on to the blankets and coats, and finally got him to his feet again and back to the path.

Descending on the other side of the path, the road zigzagged sharply and frequently. Near one turn of the path, where I was holding Nedjib

## IN TURKEY

back on a steep place to make him step lightly, I broke through the crust and was gripped tightly round the thighs. Nedjib realized that he was coming down on top of me, and to save me he reared and leaped over my head, getting a fall of at least five feet to the path below.

At the foot of the mountain was the Cherian River, usually a small stream, but now nearly a thousand yards wide and filling a large part of the Alashgerd plain; cakes of ice were whirling down the rushing torrent of the main stream. In trying to find the ford we crossed to some islands, and between two of them I suddenly found my horse in a deep hole, violently pawing the soft bottom and sides in a vain struggle to climb out. The water was up to my armpits. I slipped off and swam out, pulling Nedjib out by the reins.

We spent the night in a Kurdish village where we were hospitably entertained by a Hoja.<sup>1</sup> I went to bed, while Suleiman held my soaked garments before the fire. He was so intent on telling our host about our exploits that until I shouted to him he did not notice that half the leg of an undergarment had been burned off. It took some hours to dry my instruments which

<sup>1</sup> Teacher.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

had been in saddle-bags on Nedjib. My boots never dried, but I took no cold; my experience has been that chill in pure air does not cause a cold, but even a slight chilling in foul air will do so.

That night I was awakened from sleep by voices and a light and saw my host walking about the stable, stark naked, directing his two wives in the care of the cattle.

The last twenty-two hours of the journey I made in one stage, leaving Nedjib with Suleiman at a large village where I took post-horses. The post had left Agantz, near Van, when we did, taking a different route with relays of horses every five hours; but we had all reached this village at the same time.

On a trip to Bitlis I once had to pass over a narrow road on a mountain-side from which there was a sheer fall of one hundred and fifty feet to the rocky valley below. The path was covered with ice as smooth as glass, sloping outward; on this I hacked some longitudinal and transverse lines with a stone. My zabtieh insisted that he could lead the pack-horse safely across, but the latter had hardly stepped on the ice when his feet shot out from under him and

## IN TURKEY

hung in space over the edge of the precipice as he fell heavily on his side. I seized his head to keep him from struggling, and while I was trying to remove his load my feet, too, went over the edge. One of the longitudinal cuts in the ice was all that saved me, as it afforded a hold for my fingers, which stayed me until the zabtieh could come to my aid.

On the return trip, where at one place our path lay along the edge of a steep snow-covered slope, terminating in a perpendicular cliff, my zabtieh gave the privilege of leading the load-horse to a village Turk who had joined himself to our party. Mahomet was loath to work with his hands, so he tied the halter rope about his waist and used his hand for his staff. He was behind me; suddenly, hearing an exclamation, I turned in time to see the horse rolling over, load and all, down the steep slope toward the precipice, and Mahomet being dragged headlong after him through the snow. With a leap I reached the halter rope and, sitting down, ploughed through the snow until my feet struck a buried boulder, which stayed us while I held firm in a tug of war until the zabtieh could come to our assistance.

The story of three of my professional trips will

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

be related in the twelfth chapter. Not all my trips have been professional, of course. I have traveled seven times to Tiflis, the capital of the Russian Caucasus. On one occasion I had with me an Armenian servant named Abkar. During the reign of Abdul Hamid Armenians were not permitted to leave the country. The Turkish Government would not furnish them with passports, and the Russian Government would not admit them without these documents. When missionaries took servants with them into Russia to care for the journey horses, it was customary to get from the Russian Consul in Van a letter containing their names, which was honored at the Russian border, and the missionaries were held responsible for the return of the men. To pass the Turkish border one had to carry a Turkish passport, or a letter from the Vali, mentioning the servants.

I had such a letter from the Vali at Van mentioning Abkar by name, but the passport officer at Kara Boulakh, either in the hope of securing a bribe or in pure meanness, refused to let him pass without an order from the Mutessarif of Bayazid, so I was compelled to take the eight hours' journey to Bayazid and back to secure the

## IN TURKEY

order. The Mutessarif was as courteous as possible and wrote a brief reprimand, but failed to mention the servant by name, so the passport officer again refused to let the man pass.

This aroused my ire; it was evidently pure meanness now, and I declared that I would take Abkar with me, but as we were preparing to depart a soldier came to arrest him.

"Hands off!" I exclaimed, "whoever touches my man touches me." An officer then ordered his soldiers to shoot Abkar if he passed a certain line ten feet away.

"I have no quarrel with you," I said, turning to the men; "I know you are under orders; but I can shoot, too. If a shot is fired I will shoot, first the officer who gives the command, next the man who fires the shot. Mount, Abkar, and ride ahead of me."

We went on unmolested. I sent a note of complaint to the Mutessarif at Bayazid, and when I returned was met by a guard of honor at the boundary line and escorted through with every courtesy. The passport officer had been called to Bayazid for punishment, but his removal was only temporary, for I found him at his post on a subsequent journey and I could not have been

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

treated with more consideration than he showed me then.

My trouble on the next trip, however, was not with a Turkish official. I was to meet a party of five—one of whom was my brother—coming into the country with considerable baggage. As we needed a freight wagon for our large orphanage in Van, it was decided to take draft horses with us, buy a wagon in Russia, and bring the baggage back in that. For such a caravan as we would have, we needed four men, including a cook for the journey. I took my two-wheeled cart, with a horse which had just been broken to harness. The Russian Consul very kindly gave me a letter to the Governor of Igdir, mentioning the names of my servants and requesting courtesies for us. From the Russian custom-house at Urkub I hurried on to Igdir to hire a carriage and catch the two o'clock train from Etchmiadzin to Tiflis. My men with the horses and loads were but a short distance behind me.

I had reached the inn in the market-place and was about to have my horse stabled when a man came in to inform me that my four servants had been arrested. There was not much time to spare if I would catch the train, so, jumping into the

## IN TURKEY

cart again with an interpreter, I started for the Governor's palace to present my letter.

"Halt!" A Cossack policeman with a rifle stepped up to me. "Go slowly, ahead of me."

"I am going to the Governor and have n't time to go slowly. If you wish to go with me get into the cart."

"Go slowly ahead of me," he reiterated.

I whipped up the horses and started off, to be stopped again by a sharp command.

"I have n't time to wait and I will not; get in, if you want to go with me." He got in.

As we drove toward the Governor's palace we passed a guard-house. The sentry on duty, seeing a gentleman in a carriage with a Cossack guard, assumed that he must be some high dignitary and hastily called out the guard to salute. As we drove rapidly along my policeman, taking in the situation, motioned with his hand to the sentry not to do anything, but his motion was understood to mean, "Hurry up, hurry up," and the guard of six men rushed out, lined up, went through their evolutions with lightning speed, and as I passed whipped out their sabers and holding them at arms' length above their heads shouted, "Huzzah!" It was the most spectacular

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

salute I had ever witnessed. I returned a military salute and passed on.

The Governor was not in his audience hall, so I sent in my card stating that as I desired to catch the two o'clock train I begged an immediate audience. While waiting for His Excellency I looked around the great room, in which there was but one chair, and that intended for the Governor; as he was of royal blood and exceedingly arrogant, no one was permitted to sit in his presence. My interpreter told me of his severity and how thoroughly he was hated by the people. When he came in I handed him my letter. He stood reading it and scowling, looked at me, at the letter, at his secretary, in turn; then in a gruff voice he said to his secretary, "He is no American, he is an Armenian," indicating me. I thought I understood what he said, but to make sure I asked my interpreter and when he told me I reached over, drew the chair toward me, sat down, and regarded him with a cold, indignant stare. Every one gasped, and the Governor himself was startled. Turning to his secretary he said hastily, "He is an American, he is an American!" The moment he said, "He is an American," I rose again, and he was all courtesy, as

## IN TURKEY

polished and polite as it was possible to be, immediately granting me every favor I wished.

The delay, however, had caused me to miss the train, and while waiting for the night train an Armenian engineer and contractor who was constructing the new railroad to the Persian border took me into his car and treated me very hospitably. From him I learned the nature of his contract with the Government. It was the custom to take a map, draw a line, and say, "The railroad shall go there." He had built the railroad around a mountain instead of tunneling through. No objection was made until he was ready to turn the line over to the Government, when he was told he would receive no pay until he had tunneled through the mountain. He had a contract to build a post-road to Tabriz. No railroad concession could be given in the north of Persia to Russia without a like concession being given to Great Britain in the south, so the Russian method was to have a post-road built with culverts and grades in such a way that the rolling-stock could be put on it within two months—a railroad with all but the rails.

On the return trip I broke three ribs in an odd manner. As the train from Tiflis to Erivan made

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

but a brief stop at Etchmiadzin, my brother went outside and I passed our considerable hand luggage to him through the window. Among the conveniences of a Russian car is a small table which when not in use folds up on hinges in front of the window to break the draught. The window drops down in the sash, but only part of the way. While I was handing out a heavy grip the little table dropped down, catching my thighs as I leaned forward, and the weight of the grip threw me across the window in such a way as to break the ribs.

Having detrained our party we found our men with the freight wagon and my two-wheeled cart awaiting us. The baggage was piled on the wagon—a large, springless prairie schooner without its canopy; tarpaulins were spread over it, and upon it sat my brother, two of the ladies, and the men. They drove off and I followed in my cart with the other two ladies. My horse, newly broken to harness, had, while waiting, restlessly tossed his head until he had thrown the right-hand rein over to the left-hand side; as it was now dark this fact had passed unnoticed, but when I pulled the right rein to keep the horse in the middle of the very narrow road, on which

## IN TURKEY

was encroaching the water of a pond on the left, he swung off to the left, landing in deep mud and water. Being unaccustomed to pulling on his breast-straps, he stopped the moment he felt the strain and nothing would induce him to pull out. Deeper and deeper he sank, until, realizing that the load would have to be lightened, I got out into the water and carried the ladies in turn — each of them weighed about one hundred and ninety pounds — to dry land. A Russian coming along at that time assisted me by leading the horse, while I dug out the wheel in water and mud reaching nearly to my waist.

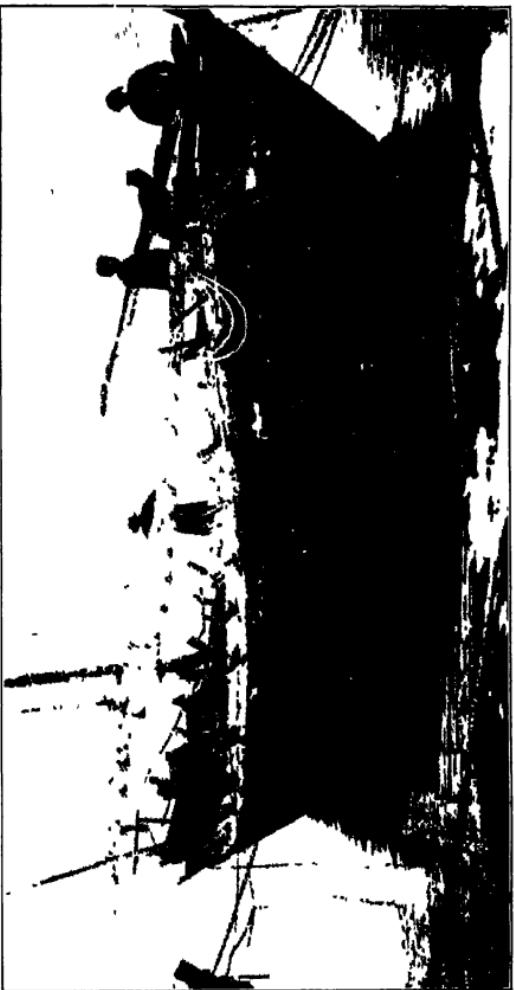
We had whistled and shouted, but the people in the wagon ahead, deafened by its rumble, had heard nothing. They rode on in blissful ignorance of our plight — and their own. It was raining, and the tarpaulin on which they sat sloped from the higher part of the load toward them; a stream of water running down behind them soaked out the bottom of a pasteboard box of cookies which they had placed there, and before long they were sitting in a pool of batter.

Miss McLaren and I once had to visit Agantz, which was just across the long northeastern arm of Lake Van. Schwester Clara decided to ac-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

company us. The trip was usually made by the native sailboats in five hours, so we did not take much provision with us when we boarded one of them in the evening. It was an open boat, about thirty-five feet long, loaded with sacks of wheat and flour, and many Armenians crowded in, considering us in the light of mascots. The boat that carried *us* was sure to reach its destination safely! The fare for natives was five piastres, but Americans were expected to pay twenty and had special privileges; a carpet was spread over branches laid on the only unoccupied spot at the bottom of the boat, and the space thus reserved for us three and our baggage was forty-seven inches wide and ninety-one inches long; our sleeping-bags, which were three feet wide, had to be laid in tiers.

As we rounded a headland called "the Beak" a half gale struck us. The natives were terrified and their "hearts began to be mixed," which is their idiom for nausea. The wind blew fiercely all night long and the small boat rocked violently. As I lay with my face almost against the side of the boat, in a space too narrow to permit the drawing-up of my knees and too short to admit of lying at full length, I gradually tucked my feet under what I supposed to be a sack of wheat.



NATIVE BOAT ON LAKE VAN



## IN TURKEY

When morning dawned what was my chagrin to find that I had thrust them under an Armenian woman too seasick to care what happened.

The storm drove us back to an island off the promontory, and after the storm there was a calm. A change in the wind tempted us to hoist the triangular sail which hung from a boom at the top of the mast, and with the aid of the oars and of light puffs of wind, we reached the opposite shore, but we were still at a great distance from our destination. A rope was attached to the top of the mast and we were towed for miles toward the only safe harbor, which we reached after the second night. Provisions and water were exhausted; the rain fell in torrents, and our only protection was a steamer rug stretched over ropes from gunwale to gunwale. Of course it sagged, and to keep it from pouring a stream into our laps we had to lift it every few seconds and empty its accumulated water into a vessel to be poured overboard. This interesting diversion continued for hours.

Finally the weather cleared. We went ashore and found that the black sand was pure emery. We filled bags with it to take back for use in our hospital. Some of the Armenians decided to

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

walk the rest of the way, rather than risk further delay. They had not been gone long, however, when a favoring breeze sprang up; we set sail and within two hours were at our destination, *seventy* hours from the time we left Van. Those who had walked arrived the next day.

This experience is a fair sample of the uncertainties and discomforts of travel on the lake in native sailboats. A boat might make the trip from Van to Bitlis—seventy miles—in a day, or it might be a week or two on the way. So we usually went by land, a journey of thirty hours.

In 1906 the Vali of Van asked me to order a knocked-down motor-boat from America to carry the mails across the lake. It was held up for years in the custom-house at Trebizonde. Under the new régime following the Turkish Revolution the embargo was raised and the boat was brought on to Van. An engineer was imported to run the motor, but although he had a diploma from Constantinople, he had never seen anything like a Wolverine motor. It needed only the adjustment of the carburetor, but the new man took it entirely to pieces, broke the steel packing while examining it, and having replaced that with a bronze one of his own casting, put it

## IN TURKEY

together again with the cams reversed. Do what he would now it would not run, so he reported to the Vali that it was of no use and had been sent incomplete from America.

The Vali at this time was Sir Ahmed, concerning whom I have much to relate in a later chapter. He sent me an official letter with orders to make that motor run at once or he would sue me. I replied that, as I had assumed no responsibility beyond that of transmitting the order for the boat, I felt myself insulted by his threat to sue.

Thereupon he changed his tactics and requested me, as a personal favor, to do what I could to help the engineer. Now I had never run a motor in my life, for there were no automobiles in America when I went to Turkey, and I knew nothing about them except what I had dug out of a book of instructions sent me by my brother. It was important, in view of our work, to possess the favor of the Vali; so, with a prayer that God would give me the wisdom that I lacked, I went to see the motor. As the engineer turned the wheel I noticed that the spark fired when the piston was descending and was able to point out to him that he had reversed the cams

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

when putting it together. He set this right and lo, the engine worked beautifully!

The engineer professed everlasting gratitude for my assistance and informed the Vali that *he* had corrected the trouble.

## CHAPTER VIII

### A MINOR MASSACRE

IN 1908 Ali Bey was Vali of Van—a man very like his royal master, Abdul Hamid, in character and methods. He used every means in his power to incite the Armenians to revolt in order to have a pretext for massacring them. Revolutionary societies had existed in Turkey for some years and were especially strong in Van because of the unusually progressive character of its people and its nearness to the Russian border. The aim of these revolutionary societies was not to secure autonomy for Armenians, but reforms in the Government: these reforms could be brought about only through the intervention of European nations. The constant endeavor of the revolutionists was to draw the attention of Europe to the Armenians and the way in which they were treated by the Ottoman Government. Their methods were not approved of by the great mass of the Armenians, and the infidel propaganda conducted by some of its leaders was especially

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

obnoxious to the deeply religious peasantry, who finally compelled them to abandon it. This propaganda had filled the Turks with horror and had, no doubt, not a little to do with enabling the intriguing Vali to arouse their hostility to Armenians generally.

Ali Bey's policy was to give every encouragement and facility to these societies to import arms and secure recruits; Turkish officials pretended to be friendly and sympathetic; those at the border closed their eyes and let arms come in by the ox-cart load. Because Kurds were encouraged to rob and murder in the villages, even those Armenians who were not in sympathy with the Tashnagists felt that they must procure the means of self-defense.

Some of the Armenian revolutionary soldiers became disaffected toward their officers, and finally one whose business it had been to secrete the arms imported betrayed their whereabouts to the Vali. This was all the excuse he desired; a storehouse was raided and as carriage-loads of ammunition and explosives were being carried away half a dozen daring Armenians, determined not to lose what would be their only means of self-defense in the massacre that the Turks hinted

## IN TURKEY

was shortly to follow, seized the carriages, frightened away the soldiers, and made a stand at a street-corner. With automatic pistols they kept several companies at bay until reinforcements came, when they took refuge in a house on the corner, and for two hours kept the Turks at a distance of two hundred yards. In front of the house was a five-gallon can of dynamite which one of the soldiers engaged in carrying off the munitions had discreetly set down in the middle of the road before he ran away. Finally a bullet struck it and the explosion that followed shattered windows in the neighborhood and threw to the ground every one within a block or two. The small garrison, ignorant of the cause of the explosion, thought that, if the Turks had a cannon which could throw a shell like that, they had better evacuate, which they did. At the same moment another company of reinforcements turned the corner from the main street into the side street on the double-quick. Its commander turned and shouted to his men, "Soldiers, flee!" himself setting them the example, while all the others, supposing that the Armenians had thrown a bomb from a window, fled likewise.

Not another shot was fired. We had heard the

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

terrific detonation, seen the white smoke and dust rise to a great height in the air, and wondered at the silence following. Not until the next day did we learn what had happened.

The Turks had already been preparing for a massacre. This incident but put a keener edge on their fanaticism. They had bands ready to operate in certain sections at a given signal and invited the Vali to a feast at which they hoped to secure his sanction to their plan to exterminate the Armenians on the following day, a certain Friday in April.

On Thursday, while "Tavit the traitor," hated by the Armenians for having jeopardized the peace of the city, was walking down the main street with a Turkish body-guard, he was shot by an Armenian boy, Dertad. Dertad immediately fled down a side street and escaped, but the guard began to fire on all Armenians in sight. Some Turkish hoodlums, hearing these shots, thought them the signal for the massacre, supposing they had mistaken the date, and thereupon began to attack the Armenians with clubs, daggers, and pistols, or such other weapons as they could improvise.

One hundred of the Armenian merchants in  
[ 128 ]

## IN TURKEY

the market-place of the walled city, essaying to reach their homes in the Gardens, were slaughtered and their bodies thrown into the lake; the rest remained in the walled city comparatively safe, as the Vali had placed guards at the gate lest the mob set fire to the markets, which the chief movers in the affair intended to loot.

Several wounded Armenians were taken into Turkish houses and there tortured and mutilated. Others escaped to the houses of friendly Turks and their relatives sent word to me, asking me to attend them professionally. I requested of the Vali a gendarme to accompany me in the most fanatical Turkish quarter, and I have reason to suspect that word was sent ahead of us to hide the wounded men, as I was unable to find a single one.

Captain Dickson, the British Vice-Consul, was indefatigable in his efforts to protect the Armenians. Although ill at the time, he went fearlessly about, driving back the Turkish mob with his horsewhip, and worked day and night, not stopping to eat, until the danger of a general massacre was past. The Vali officially, through Captain Dickson, requested that for two days I refrain from going to the walled city, promising

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

that on the third day he would give me a gendarme to accompany me thither.

On the third day, therefore, nothing doubting, I rode unaccompanied to the Vali's house, which was situated on the main street some two miles from our premises. I found the house locked and barred, and guarded from the inside by a timid Turkish soldier, the Vali himself having gone to the Government building near the walled city. A half-mile farther on I saw two men talking together in the street, who, when they saw me, ran to their houses, in quest of weapons I inferred. A little farther on the pantomime was repeated. Meanwhile I kept my hand on a small pistol which I carried in a side pocket.

On reaching the Government building I found a crowd of Turks—about six thousand in number—filling the street in front of it. They seemed greatly excited because of my appearance. I heard the word, "Spy," repeatedly and caught significant glances, but rode through the mob, which closed in behind me, entered the palace court, and, leaving my horse in charge of a soldier, went up the steps to the Vali's office.

"Yasak!" A rifle barrel pointed at me enforced the prohibition.

## IN TURKEY

I had with me a letter from Captain Dickson to the Vali, requesting the latter to facilitate the discharge of my business in the walled city, but on presenting this I was informed that a council meeting was in session and no one was allowed to enter. I asked that the letter be taken at once to the Vali and that he be informed that Dr. Ussher was there. The letter was therefore taken upstairs and soon a captain of gendarmes appeared to conduct me to the other side of the building. I was shown a seat in a room having a glass door through which I could view the stairway and the intervening courtyard. Every now and then excited men would run forward, peer through the glass door, and rush back into the crowd. Then a brusque colonel of gendarmes from Bashkalla—noted as a “bad man”—came in and began to cross-question me:—

“What are you here for at such a time as this?”

“I have business in the city.”

“What business?”

“A physician’s business—a confinement case.”

“No; you have come to make trouble.”

“I have brought a letter from the British Consul to the Vali.”

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

"Yes, it is these consuls who are making all this trouble. The British and French Consuls are inciting the Armenians to rebel."

This nettled me. "You know that what you are saying is not true."

"Yes, it is, and you are doing it, too!"

"What is that you say?"

"You are helping the revolutionists and have one of them now in your hospital."

"Who?"

"The man with a bullet in his arm."

"Yes; I have a man there wounded in the arm."

"There! Didn't I tell you so? Why do you take revolutionists into your hospital?"

"I do not inquire whether a man is good or bad, a Moslem or a Christian; I simply ask, 'Does he need me? Is he sick?' If he comes to me as a patient I do my best for him. I would do the same for you, or any one else. I treat all alike. If the Devil himself came to me as a patient I should feel it my duty to do the best I could for him."

At this he threw up his hands in shocked despair and the conversation ended.

Just then I heard a clatter of feet on the stairs

## IN TURKEY

and, thinking the Vali was coming down, I walked out of the door to meet him and found an excited group of fifty of the leading Turks of Van ordering the mob to go home and expressing their chagrin that the Sultan had forbidden a massacre.

Making my way up the stairs I found the civil and military governors discussing telegrams which they held, commenting on the thoroughness of the plans laid for a massacre, and reading messages from various Kurdish chiefs which stated the number of armed men that each could bring within thirty-six hours. So intent were they on the matter in hand that, although I had been announced, my appearance seemed greatly to surprise them.

“What are you doing here?”

“Waiting for a reply to the consul’s letter.”

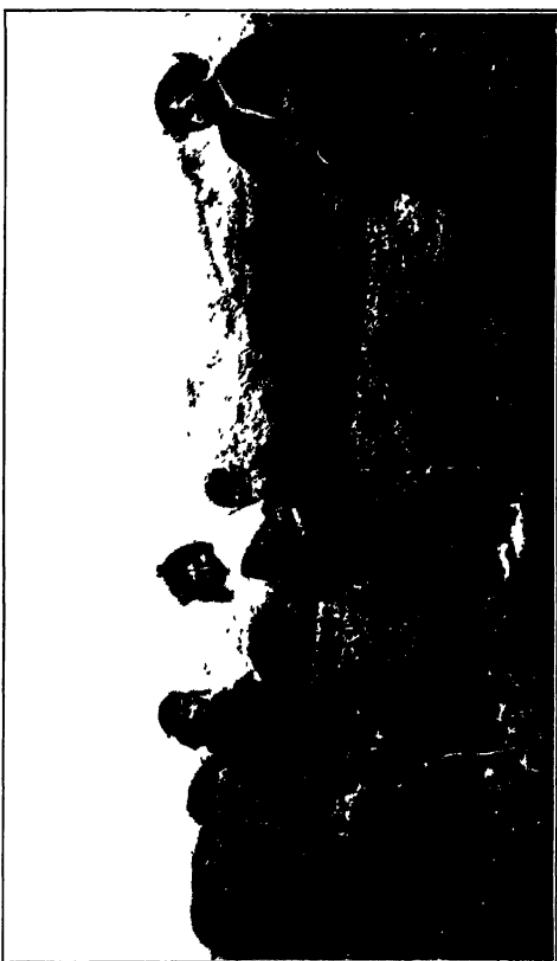
“What letter?”

Just then an officer entered bearing the letter, which had evidently been withheld with the intention of keeping the Governor in ignorance of my whereabouts, the under-officers having planned to prevent my return home had the massacre been permitted. The Vali read me the telegram which had come from the Sultan: “Tell

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

the Moslems to live at peace with their neighbors." This order was the result of vigorous representations made by the embassies.

So the Vali dispersed the mob, refusing to distribute the arms for which it had been clamoring, asked me what I had seen outside, and gave a guard of four gendarmes to escort me safely to the city and back home. These went with me into the city, but, professing fear, refused to approach the Armenian quarter. As I went up the street excited groups of Turks saw me coming, and several of them ran to their homes with the evident intention of procuring rifles. I raised the rein on Nedjib's neck and he sailed past without apparent effort. Then I saw a man with a rifle on his shoulder, who, looking back, recognized me, and, looking again to make sure of my identity, deliberately pulled a cartridge from his pocket and loaded his rifle. I overtook a Turkish officer at this moment riding up the street between me and the malicious-looking man with the rifle, engaged him in conversation until we had passed the civilian, then, bidding him good-evening, I quickened my pace, leaving him as a screen between me and danger, and went on to announce the good news that the Sultan had



KURDISH VILLAGERS



## **IN TURKEY**

forbidden a massacre. Knowing that none would take place without his sanction, the Armenians soon ventured to open their shops again and conditions once more became normal. This minor massacre was in reality an aborted massacre.

## CHAPTER IX

### MY SABBATICAL YEAR

A FEW weeks later I left Van with my family for a year in America. Mission boards grant furloughs once in seven years, knowing that the efficiency of their missionaries is thus trebled. A man on the field is constantly giving out of himself to his work and his people without the opportunity which educators, ministers, and physicians in America always have of receiving from others practical help, cheer, encouragement, and inspiration. After his year of furlough, revigorated in body, mind, and spirit by rest, study, and the getting into touch with the outside world and its progressive movements, he can accomplish almost thrice as much in a given time as he could before taking his vacation.

Toward the end of my first five strenuous years of service I was feeling constantly fagged, physically and mentally much below par. I had built my own hospital and supported it almost entirely by my earnings; had trained my own nurses, and

## IN TURKEY

bore the financial as well as professional responsibility of the medical department alone. I tried to secure a native assistant who could look after my hospital and patients when I made my professional trips to other cities and to take charge during my absence on furlough. At the end of ten years such an assistant had not been found, but my associates insisted on my taking my vacation then, for I was on the verge of nervous exhaustion. Since there was no one to take my place the hospital had to be closed and its twenty employees discharged. Some of them were permanently lost to the work for which they had been laboriously prepared, finding employment as teachers in city or villages.

There were no newspapers in the interior of Turkey or other means of letting people in distant districts know that I was going, so for months after my departure patients continued to come from afar. There were heartrending sights when those who had traveled for weeks, buoyed up by the belief that if they could reach the "Hakim bashi" in Van with one breath of life left in them all would be well, arrived and found me gone and the hospital closed. Many had sold all their possessions to pay the expenses of a long, hard

## 'AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

journey, in the hope that the life of a loved one might be saved. What anguish was theirs when this hope was taken away! They had longed for me and I was not there! A few physicians-at-large on mission fields could do splendid service taking over temporarily the work of those who leave, and traveling in regions remote from hospitals. Missionaries-at-large are also needed, for stations are so undermanned that the absence for a year of one worker imposes a heavy burden on his associates.

As soon as it was known that we were to leave, we were literally overwhelmed with requests for permission to "travel in our shadow" or to act as our servants during the journey. The Government would not allow us to take Armenians in any capacity across the Russian border, so we had to travel to the Black Sea via Erzerum, a longer and more difficult route than the one through the Caucasus, and forty people, most of whom had once been orphans in our orphanage, were permitted to accompany us.

We wired for horses to meet us at El-javas on the other side of Lake Van, chartering a native boat to carry our party across. All our American and German friends and scores of Armenians

## IN TURKEY

accompanied us to Avants, the port of Van. Our boat, thirty-eight feet long by thirteen feet beam, with a footboard running around the pit at the level of the gunwale, was far too small for our large party and its baggage. Mrs. Ussher, quiet and resourceful in the midst of the noisy crowd, spread a quilt on the rear deck, laid our sleepy little folk on it and piled traveling-bags around like a wall to keep others from trampling on them.

Our associates on their long drive back to our premises were halted several times by sentinels and allowed to pass only when the assurance was given that they were Americans. After all had left but two Armenians, one of whom was to take back my horse, I found that in the hurry and confusion of our preparations I had forgotten my passport and left it in my desk. There was nothing for it but to get it myself. I overtook the Russian Consul, who, realizing that there were certain dangers for a lone traveler so late in the evening, sent his armed kavass with me. Five times on the road rifles were leveled at us and we were halted. I was allowed to go on only when it was learned that the Russian kavass was with me. We heard later that immediately after my

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

departure the Government officials had thrown a cordon of soldiers around the Armenian quarter. The Vali told our British Consul that he had postponed search for revolutionary supplies until I had left, lest my determination to go about my duties should embarrass him in the execution of his plans.

We had to wait until the night breeze should make it possible for us to sail away from the shore, for native boats are built with one mast raking forward; the boom of the triangular sail is hoisted to the top of the mast, the apex coming near the deck. This carries the boats rapidly before the wind, but, being flat-bottomed, they are unable to tack or beat up against the wind, so are at the mercy of the weather. The sides are unlined, and in our boat wherever the calking was defective small streams trickled down, wetting our bedding and other baggage. The reeking walls and floor of the tiny cabin made it impossible as a shelter except in case of severe storms.

As we drew near Gduts Anabad, an island at the junction of the long arm of the lake with the main body, the sweep of the wind alarmed our boatmen, so they hastily turned in and anchored not far from an ancient monastery sacred to the

## IN TURKEY

memory of John the Baptist. As his life was taken at the request of a woman, no "females" were permitted to set foot on the island. It was said that even hens were taboo. Our American ladies and educated orphan girls were evidently not considered ordinary females by the venerable monks who hospitably entertained us all.

When the gale moderated we again embarked. We were becalmed halfway, but persuaded the sailors to get out the sweeps, and all worked at them with a will for the remaining twenty miles to El-javas. The steady rise of the lake had already devoured half of the old city and we could see its walls and foundations extending far under the crystal-clear water.

On landing we were greeted by a grateful old patient. Hadji Ibrahim had come to my hospital a year before and had insisted on a radical operation for hernia. When nearly well he called me to him one day and said he had a confession to make; our Scripture readings had impressed him; he knew now that it was wrong to lie and asked me to forgive him for having lied to me. He had heard that I sometimes refused to operate on very old people, so he had told me that he was fifty-five years old when, as a matter of fact, he

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

was ninety-five. Here he was at ninety-six years of age carrying on his back a sack of wheat which I would not have cared to lift!

The horses that awaited us at this place were a wretched lot, not fit to carry one third of the usual load, for there was a fodder famine in the region; three hundred horses had died of starvation in one village. Mrs. Ussher was given a disreputable beast with such a mass of putrefying sores under the saddle that riding it was intolerable. Just outside the city wall this walking skeleton, in spite of whip and rein, persisted in turning aside into a great dreary Turkish graveyard, walked up to the edge of a newly made grave, and stood there. There was much comment on the intelligence of an animal which so evidently knew where it belonged. The muleteers had to trade it off for a better before long.

Our caravan was a large one—twenty-nine horses and forty-nine people. The three younger children rode in moffahs, the oldest on top of a load. We carried with us our bedding and provisions, for, as I have said in an earlier chapter, the *odahs* in eastern Turkey provide the traveler with little more than shelter. Our progress was unusually slow owing to our numbers, our

## IN TURKEY

wretched animals, bad weather, and worse roads. The horses were constantly stumbling and falling; one memorable day eighteen of them went down; the animal carrying our bedding deliberately lay down in a stream he was fording and found difficulty in rising with his soaked load. A bitterly cold rain drenched us and all our belongings. The mud was so deep and the rain came in such torrents that we could not stop to feed the hungry babies.

We were assured by the caretaker of the monastery where we stopped for the night that there was not a room in the building that was not leaking in every yard of it. I persisted in investigating for myself, and finding several dry and empty rooms insisted on staying there over Sunday. We learned later that fear of punishment by the Government was the cause of this reluctance to entertain us.

The banks of the Murad Su were so steep on either side of the bridge we had made a long détour to cross that the men had to push the horses up to keep them from falling over backward. A smaller river, usually forded with ease, was now a rushing torrent. We drove in one of the pack-animals and he was whirled away heels over

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

head. The only bridge was a telegraph pole. As a small boy I had been interested in Blondin and other acrobats and had tried with my playmates to imitate their feats in a circus of our own. Now I was able with a steady head to walk this pole, carrying the children across, and returned again and again to lead the rest of the party over. Truly, one can acquire no accomplishment that may not prove of value some time on the mission field! One of the Armenian ladies, scorning my aid, walked out about six feet, then lost her nerve, straddled the pole, and gradually worked her way across, holding up the traffic for twenty minutes meanwhile.

Sixteen days after we left Van we reached Erzerum and the hospitable home of the missionaries there. Thence we went to Trebizond by carriage. The horses were so slow that we would travel from 4 A.M. until after sunset to make an eight-hour stage, and the children, tired out, would fall asleep while supper was being prepared and often could not be aroused even by undressing them for bed.

At Baiburt we heard of a movement of troops to put down a revolt of the Kurds in the Dersim. At Gumush Khana we with difficulty prevented

## IN TURKEY

soldiers from seizing our carriages and leaving us stranded. A little later one of the two *fourgoons* of our Armenian companions was commandeered and its occupants, who had paid for the journey to Trebizond, were compelled to walk, carrying their baggage on their backs.

We were traveling the road over which Xenophon with his Ten Thousand made his memorable retreat, and as the first sight of the Black Sea flashed upon us we realized something of the thrill that must have passed through the Greek army after its long wanderings. Many of the descendants of those Greeks still inhabit that beautiful region. For hours we traveled through a natural park; through acres of rhododendron and peonies with here and there blue splashes of forget-me-not; then, descending steadily the heavily wooded mountain-slope, we followed, through valleys adorned with every imaginable hue of green, the course of a torrent that plunged ever downward in a series of cascades. As we stopped at the last village to water the horses my eight-year-old, who had been riding in the second carriage, came running forward with the exclamation, "Oh, mamma! It was so beautiful I could n't help crying."

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

The Black Sea steamers are mostly the smaller discarded ships of the Mediterranean lines. The passenger deck of our steamer was filled with foul-smelling sheep crowded under the windows of the dining-saloon. All of our American party except myself were seasick. As there was no stewardess I performed her offices and have never decided which of us all enjoyed the voyage most. From Constantinople we traveled all the way by sea to New York. Shortly after our arrival in America the unexpected happened in Turkey—the Revolution—concerning which I shall write in the next chapter.

During my furlough I made more than one hundred addresses all over the country, visited hospitals, and spent two weeks at the Mayo Brothers' Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota,—a clinic which no medical missionary should miss.

A great sorrow marked this visit to the home land we had so longed for throughout the weary weeks of travel and of preparation for leaving Van; it was a sorrow that made the Home Land across the River more dear to our hearts than ever before, for the Father who had given her to us now took back our little Dorothea to Himself.

We returned to our field via the Russian Cau-

## IN TURKEY

casus, Miss S. M. Louise Bond, an English nurse in Cork, going with us to become superintendent of my hospital. Etchmiadzin in the Caucasus is the seat of the Armenian Catholicos. Hairig Khremian, the idol of the Armenians, had died, and we attended the consecration services of the new Catholicos Ismerlian, and were assigned positions in the procession just back of his immediate suite. The over-eager crowd of Armenians, desirous of seeing the anointing in the cathedral, crushed in back of the Catholicos, cutting off the rest of the procession. Russian soldiers with fixed bayonets charged on the crowd to restore order, thus causing a panic, during which some one trod upon the long skirt of Mrs. Ussher's companion, who fell, dragging Mrs. Ussher with her. For an instant it took all my strength to hold back the crowd until they could rise. The next morning we were given audience with His Holiness, conveyed to him the greetings of the American missionaries of Turkey, with which we had been charged at Constantinople, and in return were assured of his deep sympathy with the work we were doing for his people.

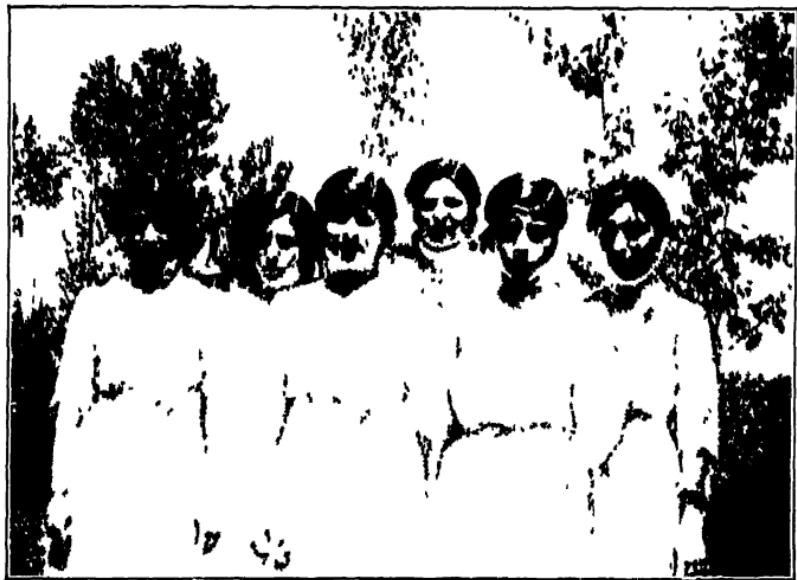
As we approached Van we were met by party after party of Armenians who, in wagons, on

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

horseback and on foot, had come out to welcome us. Thousands lined the streets as we passed through and waved us greetings, while young men on horseback dashed back and forth, firing pistols in the air and celebrating to their hearts' content. Before our furlough, even the possession of a weapon by an Armenian was sufficient to cause his imprisonment under a life sentence. The Revolution had changed all that. It had changed the very faces of the people; it had changed the character of their music. I had heard nothing but minor strains in Turkey before this, but now they were singing the music of olden days in a glorious major key.

Three days after our arrival we reopened our hospital and patients who had been waiting anxiously for my return crowded in. Soon we were at work with renewed vigor and able to ease a little the burdens of our associates who had been carrying all they could of our share of the mission work while we rested.

One old friend I sadly missed on my return. Nedjib had pined for me through all the long year of my absence, would not eat, and grew so thin and weak that Dr. Raynolds and Mr. Yarrow questioned whether they ought not to put



GIRLS' HIGH-SCHOOL CLASS



ARMENIAN-GREEK FAMILY  
Mt. Varak in background, as seen from teachers' home

TYPES OF PEOPLE NOW DESTITUTE



## IN TURKEY

him out of his misery. Before my return I wrote that I wanted him brought to meet me at Igdir. They say that when the men in the stable talked about sending Nedjib to meet me, he pricked up his ears and began to eat. Instead of losing weight like most horses while on the long journey over the mountains, he gained in flesh and spirits and arrived at Igdir a sight for the town; two hundred people gathered to look at him. That night he was stolen by a Yezidee, or "Devil-Worshiper," and taken to a village near the Persian border.

A month later I learned of his whereabouts and informed the Vali, who sent zabtiehs to find him. The thief, warned of their coming, mounted and rode off, pursued by the gendarmes. Finally, hard pressed, he circled round to his village, tied Nedjib to an ox-cart and, removing the saddle, left the horse in a violent hailstorm which covered the ground three inches deep. Nedjib went readily, even eagerly, with the zabtiehs, evidently knowing that he was on the way home and happy in the thought. Near Van one man remarked to the other, "It is evening; the Doctor will be tired after his day's work; let us go back to a near village now and take the horse to the

## **AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN**

Doctor in the morning when he is fresh, and we will receive a larger baksheesh." They accordingly turned from the highway, but Nedjib refused to follow; they forced him off the road, whereupon the poor animal, heart-broken at being turned back when so near home, stopped, trembled an instant, then dropped dead. Thus ended the missionary service of one who had been my close companion, loyal, loving, and beloved, for ten years.

## CHAPTER X

### THE TURKISH REVOLUTION

SOME knowledge of the history of the Armenians and of their National Church is needed to help one understand political conditions in the Ottoman Empire.

The first Armenian Kingdom was the Kingdom of Urartu (an Assyrian name that appears in the Bible in the form of Ararat), "a splendid monarchy which for at least two centuries rivaled the claims of Assyria to the dominion of the ancient world."<sup>1</sup> Its people, who called themselves Khuldians,<sup>2</sup> or children of Khuldis, built the city of Van, made it their capital, and left behind them a great number of cuneiform inscriptions in a language that is neither Semitic nor Indo-European. Excavations in Toprak Kala Mountain, the northern boundary of the suburbs or

<sup>1</sup> H. F. B. Lynch, *Armenia*. Mr. Lynch has in this book a most interesting and instructive chapter on the topography, history, and antiquities of Van.

<sup>2</sup> Not to be confounded with the Chaldaeans, who made Babylonia a world power in the 7th century.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

“Gardens” of Van, disclosed an ancient settlement and laid bare a temple built in honor of the god Khuldis, as we know from the engravings on the bronze shields it contained, some of which are now in the British Museum and some in the Museum of Berlin. Messrs. Belck and Lehmann-Haupt shortly before my arrival in Van had excavated further, discovered many weapons and ornaments of bronze and silver, and identified Toprak Kala with the Khuldian city of Rusas, mentioned in inscriptions found on Mount Varag.

This empire continued to exist until the latter half of the seventh century B.C., when its people, whom Professor Sayce calls Proto-Armenians, began to be supplanted by the ancestors of the present-day Armenians whose migrations thus almost completed a circle; for, having entered Europe by the usual route from Central Asia, between the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea, they had penetrated the Grecian peninsula, then crossed the Hellespont into Asia Minor on the very heels of the Scythian hordes which had laid Nineveh low and devastated empires. They intermarried with the Khuldians and borrowed much from their culture, but were themselves

## IN TURKEY

'Aryans, Indo-Europeans, belonging to the Thraco-Phrygian family of nations, claiming descent from Haig, son of Togarmah, grandson of Japhet (Gen. 10), and call themselves Hai, or children of Haig, and their country Haiasdan.

Armenia next became a satrapy of the empire of Darius and Xerxes. The inscription on Castle Rock, to which I referred in the third chapter, is a record of this conquest.

In the second century B.C. the governors of this province became independent kings of a new dynasty, the Arsacid or Parthian dynasty, which continued to rule in Armenia after being supplanted in Persia by the Sassanian dynasty. Tigranes the Great (94-56 B.C.) freed his country from the Persians, conquered Syria and Mesopotamia, extended his power over much of Asia Minor and founded a new capital, Tigranocerta, the modern Diarbekir, still called by the Armenians Dikranagerd, city of Tigranes. He formed an alliance with his father-in-law Mithridates against the Romans, was at first successful, but at last surrendered his conquests to Pompey. The Armenians later became the allies of Rome against Persia. Their kingdom became the

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

battle-ground between these two powers and was partitioned between them in the fourth century A.D.

After the Arab conquest in the seventh century the Governor of Vaspuragan, or Van, was made king of that province by the Caliph, and his descendants ruled Van and Sivas until 1080. Two Armenians, Leo V and John Zimisces, were emperors of the Byzantine Empire and others were among its best generals. Armenia became part of the Seljuk Empire in the eleventh century, was devastated by Tamerlane, and finally in the sixteenth century was conquered by the Osmanli Turks.

The Armenians believe that the Apostle Thaddeus, sent by Christ himself, evangelized their country and there are to-day many churches said to have been founded by Thaddeus and Thomas. It is quite probable that Christianity was professed by many Armenians before Gregory the Illuminator converted Tiridates and made it the religion of the State in the third century A.D. The king and his Minister traveled about the country preaching and overthrowing the strongholds of paganism. The title of Catholicos was applied to Saint Gregory; the office, hereditary in his

## IN TURKEY

family as long as there were heirs, was one of extraordinary power, prestige, and splendor, and, long outlasting the Kingdom of Armenia, has survived the changes of sixteen centuries, impressive and influential to this day.

The tenacity with which the Armenians have clung to their religion has been equaled only by their obstinate patriotism. Beset first by the Persians determined to convert them to Zoroastrianism, next by the Mohammedan Arabs, menaced or cajoled by the Roman Church, they preserved "in the face of overwhelming odds the inflexible individuality of their race." In their conflict with the Fire-Worshipers one of their armies under the brave Vartan was exterminated, but the Persian general wrote back to his sovereign that it was useless to attempt to convert a people who would fight for their religion to the last man, and the tyrant withdrew his troops.

This tragedy has been reenacted again and again in later times, the Armenians giving up their lives for the religion the Ottoman Government would compel them to renounce. The aim of the Ottoman Government has been political homogeneity. The periodical massacres have been political moves, although religious fanati-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

cism has been appealed to and has played a great part in the horrors of these wholesale murders. Armenian or other Christian subjects of the empire could by embracing Islam secure themselves against this ever-present fear of death and also against gross injustice in the administration of the law. I give a few examples of this injustice.

Although the Code Napoléon is the civil code of Turkey, a non-Moslem charged with crime was considered guilty until he proved his innocence. If he could not be found the police would take his father or brother or cousin; or, failing a relative, the head man of his ward, or the chief men of his village, whom they would imprison or torture until the culprit was given up.

When a Mohammedan killed a Christian he had, according to his teachers, done God a service and insured his own salvation. But when a Christian killed a Mohammedan, even in self-defense, the Turks took a tenfold blood revenge, and when he himself escaped across the border they often pillaged his village or town, burning houses, outraging women, and slaughtering his friends. I have sometimes seen a stalwart peasant submitting with lowered head and folded

## IN TURKEY

arms to a beating from a Turk whom he could easily have throttled. But the Armenian knew that not he alone, but his family and clan, would be punished for any attempt at retaliation.

Turkish courts rarely gave a verdict for a Christian against a Moslem. A Kurdish chief in the province of Van once purchased a beautifully engraved sword and was riding proudly with his retainers to his village when he came upon an Armenian trudging along the road, staff in hand. Said the Kurd to himself, "Here is a chance to try my new sword," and without more ado he slashed at the Armenian's head. The man parried with his staff and the sword broke. The Kurd had the Armenian seized and dragged before the judge in Agantz and demanded pay for the broken sword. In vain the villager pleaded that he had done nothing but hold his stick over his head as a protection and that the Kurd had broken his own sword. The Mohammedan judge roared at him: "Did you not know it was a *Kurd* that was striking you? How dared you put your stick over your head?" He compelled the Armenian to pay for the sword, and "*Kurd der vourar*" (it is a Kurd that strikes) became a proverb in the Van region. Often when I have

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

urged Armenians to take just claims against Moslems to the Ottoman courts I have been answered with, "Kurd der yourar," a reply which was meant to convey the hopelessness of the attempt.

A Mohammedan robber, entering one night the house of a Jacobite Christian in northern Arabia, while groping in the darkness ran his eye against a nail driven into a post for the purpose of hanging a wall lamp. He haled the Christian before a Mohammedan judge and demanded that he pay a heavy fine and have one of his own eyes gouged out for having a nail where it could injure the eye of a Mohammedan burglar. In vain the Christian protested that the Arab had no business there and had injured himself; the judge exacted the penalty.

One method of robbing Armenians was to fail to collect some special tax for several years and then suddenly demand cash payment of all arrears. Peasants, whatever their wealth in cattle or land, seldom had much ready money. The tax-gatherer would go to a village with a band of zabtiehs and a number of wealthy Turks from a neighboring village and demand receipts for certain taxes for a period of five, ten, or twenty years. For some of those years there would be

## IN TURKEY

no receipts to show, because the taxes had not been collected; the receipts for the remaining years would very often have been destroyed in some massacre. But the tax-gatherer took no account of these things: if the receipts were not instantly forthcoming the villagers were beaten and compelled to pay, or to have their fields, cattle, or standing crops sold at auction for one tenth of their value to the wealthy Turks.

Why have not the Armenians emigrated in greater numbers to escape this oppression and the fear of massacre? The Turkish Government would not permit them to emigrate without first renouncing their citizenship and inheritance rights in Turkey, selling all their possessions and promising not to return. Passports would not be issued to men trying to return. Armenians are passionately attached to their native land and to their ancient traditions. Property has passed from father to son for generations. So, many a man has gritted his teeth and determined to endure anything rather than be separated from his people and their glorious past, and deprive his children and children's children of their rightful inheritance.

Those who did emigrate were so well fleeced

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

before their departure by every device possible to officialdom that they were apt to have but little left wherewith to establish a home in a new land. Fictitious arrears of taxes had to be paid; passports had to be viséed by a dozen officials, each of whom extorted a bribe; finally they were often imprisoned at the seaport and parted from most of the remainder of their money under threat of being sent back.

The Armenian element was the most progressive element in the Ottoman Empire. The financiers, the successful merchants, the professional men, the skilled artisans of the country were most of them Armenians, and Armenians held many of the positions under the Government which demanded fidelity and integrity. They were the creators of the country's wealth. Turkey, as far as material and intellectual advancement was concerned, was following a suicidal policy in banishing and massacring the people of this race.

The spirit of rebellion, not alone among the Christians, but among the more intelligent Turks, grew strong during the misrule and oppression of Abdul Hamid's reign. There were three revolutionary societies among the Armenians: the Tashnagists, or Unionists, and the

## IN TURKEY

Hunchagists, believed in the methods of assassination and compulsion; the Armenists decried these methods and represented the more cultivated part of the population. The Tashnagist Society was the largest, wealthiest, and most thoroughly organized of the three. There were revolutionary societies in Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Serbia; there was also a secret organization of Young Turks with its headquarters in Salonica, of which the leaders were Niazi Bey, an Albanian, Enver Bey, Shevket Pasha, Djemal Bey, and Talaat Bey. In 1907 a meeting of all the revolutionary societies was held in Paris. The Young Turks made a compact with the others, promising them legal standing under the new régime they hoped to establish.

In 1908 emissaries from Abul Hamid endeavored to incite the Armenians to acts of rebellion and certain officials encouraged revolutionary activities and kept themselves on friendly terms with Armenians until they had secured from them much valuable information. Then all arms and ammunition were confiscated. Van's experience at this time is related in the chapter "A Minor Massacre." The Armenian societies became helpless and discouraged.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Meanwhile, however, the Young Turks had secured the good-will of the army and in July sent telegrams to Abdul Hamid demanding Huriet, or constitutional government. Hamid, depending on the loyalty of his Albanian guard, refused. But the Young Turks secured from the leading Albanians their promise to support the Constitution. These Albanians also telegraphed the Sultan demanding the Huriet. Then Hamid yielded and on July 25, 1908, proclaimed the Constitution. This Constitution (written by an Armenian) had been promulgated by him on his accession, but had been set aside when his power became established.

All the world rejoiced in the fraternizing of Moslem and Christian. Men of all parties embraced in public. Young Turks went to Armenian cemeteries and offered prayers for the martyrs of the massacres. Leaders of the revolutionary societies were elected to Parliament and given governmental positions.

But Abdul Hamid was still the same wily old Sultan. With incessant intrigues he brought about a reaction among the older Turks, then planned massacres in the leading cities of the empire to discredit the new régime. The one

## IN TURKEY

planned for Constantinople was prevented by the adherents of the Young Turk Party; Aintab was saved by the determination of an officer who defied the Sultan; the Vali of Adana was one of Abdul's minions and for three days there was slaughter in that city—the 14th, 15th, and 16th of April, 1909. Rogers and Maurer, two American missionaries, were killed in this massacre.

The massacre in Van was planned for the 26th. Bands of Turks armed with daggers were to be ready at the head of each street in the bazaar or market; at the appointed moment they were to close the gates of the market and, passing quietly without outcry or pistol shot from shop to shop, they were to kill all the Armenians, allowing none to escape and warn others. Having thus disposed of nearly all the able-bodied men, they were to raise the cry that the Armenians in the Gardens were attacking the Turkish women there in the absence of their protectors, and, enlisting the help of the unsuspecting soldiers, they were to rush out into the Armenian quarters and begin a slaughter which, they bound themselves by an oath, should last three days; after that they would divide the spoil.

When day dawned on the 26th of April so vio-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

lent a blizzard was raging that the Armenians did not attempt the three-mile walk from their homes to the bazaar in the walled city, and thus were frustrated the plans for a massacre on that day.

Meanwhile the Macedonian army, the "army of liberty," was marching on the Capital. Emissaries from the Sultan had tried to corrupt it, but discipline prevailed. After some fighting in the streets of Constantinople, Abdul Hamid was deposed on the 27th of April, his brother placed on the throne, and the Government passed into the hands of the Young Turks who hung those found plotting with the Sultan against them.

A detachment of the army had marched to Adana "to preserve tranquillity," reaching there the morning of the 25th; that evening they started the great massacre at Adana. The chairman of the Adana branch of the Young Turk Party was active in this massacre. He was court-martialed by the Young Turks and sentenced to three years' exile.

The Committee of Union and Progress, as the Young Turk Party called itself, did splendid work in reconstruction. Certain limitations were abolished; there was freedom of travel through-

## IN TURKEY

out the country; Christians were permitted to bear arms and were enlisted in the army. The Armenian revolutionary societies resolved themselves into political parties, and "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" became the motto of the Constitutional Government.

In October, 1908, in addressing a large audience in the Academy of Music, Brooklyn, I warned those who were optimistic about the future of Turkey that the slogan of the Young Turk Party was "Turkey for the Turks"; that its friendship with Christians was a friendship of expediency; within five years there would be a reaction followed by the worst massacre the country had ever known, mitigated only to the extent to which practical Christianity had come in touch with the Moslem.

## CHAPTER XI

### “BEFORE GOVERNORS AND KINGS”

SIR AHMED was a Circassian nobleman living in Constantinople in Abdul Hamid's time. He was a big fellow, over six feet in height, with a massive head; a man of dominating personality, quick-tempered, fearless, accustomed to having his own way. His education in Turkey had been above the ordinary and he had also spent some time in French universities.

Spies aroused the suspicion in Abdul Hamid's mind that Sir Ahmed was a “Young Turk”; that is, a member of the Turkish Revolutionary Party. He belonged to too prominent a family to be summarily removed as many had been by the Sultan, but the wily monarch appointed him Vali of Amasia, in the province of Sivas, and said to him with a warning look before sending him away:—

“Do as you please in Amasia, but do not come back to Constantinople or your life will be forfeit.”

## IN TURKEY

In Amasia the young man had a Circassian rival who had sent valuable horses and other presents to Abdul Hamid and had in return been permitted to rob and plunder as he pleased; whoever crossed him was disposed of either by the Sultan or himself. He had become so daring that at one time, I have been told, he carried off from the very gate of the city of Marsovan forty-two wagons loaded with merchandise on its way from Europe and America to merchants in the interior via Samsun, the Black Sea port. Valis and police had felt compelled to close their eyes to his depredations.

Sir Ahmed called his chief of police and ordered him to bring this robber chief before him.

“Oh, but can I? How can I?”

“You bring him, or your head will go.”

With a low salaam the chief of police withdrew. Whether he gave the Circassian an invitation to a feast, or told him the Vali had some new honor for him from the Sultan, or wanted his advice about the government of the district, I do not know. Turkish diplomats use such methods. However it was managed, the Circassian came one evening to be the guest of the

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Vali. Sir Ahmed informed him that he would be hanged in the morning.

"Oh, no, I will not; I'll appeal to the Sultan; he is my friend."

"I am Vali here, and the Sultan has nothing to say about it." And the noted and powerful robber chief was hanged the next morning. The fear of that Vali fell upon all the district; robbers sought refuge in other provinces, and his fame spread far.

When Abdul Hamid was deposed, Sir Ahmed being in the inner councils of the Young Turk Party was appointed Vali of the province of Van. At this time the success of our schools and hospital was attracting attention. Our treaties with Turkey gave us the right to own property and real estate, to conduct and prosecute our legitimate business, and to have our premises and persons inviolable by Ottoman officials. When the Turk took Constantinople he found certain capitulations<sup>1</sup> in force and for his own advantage saw fit to perpetuate them. The capitulations renounced all rights over the person and property of the foreigner, who was to be amenable only to his own Government through his consuls. These

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

## IN TURKEY

privileges, granted by the Sultan at first for his own benefit, were later demanded by the Franks as a right and Francis I had them included in a treaty with Suleiman the Magnificent in the sixteenth century. The French treaty of 1740 was made the basis for subsequent arrangements with other nations. America negotiated a treaty granting these privileges to Americans without reference to the capitulations, and also by the "favored nation" clause secured to American citizens all privileges which should hereafter be granted to any other most favored nation.

Sir Ahmed was so tyrannical that, harking back to Mohammedan law, which says that a foreigner may live in the country and do business unmolested for a year, but at the end of the year must either become a Mohammedan, quit the country, or become a slave and pay tribute, he dared to announce that he would have the American doctor deported and the hospital and schools closed.

Before deporting us he, as a conscientious Mohammedan, would give us a chance to accept his faith. It was Ramazan, when Mohammedans fast absolutely from sunrise to sunset throughout a lunar month. On the fifteenth day of this fast

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

many Mohammedans invite “infidels” to an evening feast for the purpose of converting them to Islam. To such a banquet the Vali invited the male missionaries of Van, Protestant and Catholic. Mr. Yarrow was confined to the house with a malarial attack and was unable to be present. Dr. Raynolds and I were the first to arrive, the other guests appearing after we were seated at the table, which was furnished “à la Frank;” it would have been a sin for a Moslem to delay his acceptance of Allah’s bounty, so, although these others had been expected momently, we did not wait.

Sir Ahmed sat at the head of a long table, Dr. Raynolds was at his right, and next to him a Chaldean Catholic Bishop. The writer was at the Vali’s left, and around the table were Catholic priests and Turkish officers.

After we had feasted on a delicious thirteen-course dinner, a sweet and a meat served alternately, each dish a separate course, the Vali opened the religious conversation by addressing the black-and-crimson-robed Bishop:—

“My Lord Bishop, will you kindly tell me what you think I must do to enter Paradise?”

“Your Excellency,” replied the Bishop, “if

## IN TURKEY

you will permit me, I believe that God, for Jesus Christ's sake, pardons my sins and will receive me into Paradise."

"No, sir," said Sir Ahmed; "I cannot accept that, for I believe God to be absolutely just and righteous and one who is absolutely just cannot show favoritism. I am Vali here and my power is practically absolute; you might have a friend in prison for debt to the Government [Turkish law imprisons a debtor until his debt be paid]; you might come to me and say, 'My friend is in prison for a debt which he can never pay, I beg you for my sake to pardon and release him.' I am a man; I might not want to hurt your feelings or deny you anything as my friend; I might pardon him; but if I did so I should be wronging the whole people. If God can do that kind of thing he is no more righteous than I am; I cannot believe that of him."

I thought Sir Ahmed's answer a good one and was interested to see how the Bishop would reply. But he said not a word more and I began to realize that this was one of the most critical moments of my life. Here was my religion on trial before Islam; the Vali had asked a perfectly fair question, the most important question any man could

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

ask,—practically “What must I do to be saved?” and it was up to Christianity to give him a satisfactory reply. If it could not it was not worth while as a religion. What could the Bishop have said?

I had got so far in my thought when Sir Ahmed, speaking loudly, as if to the far end of the table, but with his eyes turned slightly toward me, said, “Doctor Ussher, what do you say?” I did not know what to say, but I remembered the promise of Christ Himself, “Before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake . . . but when they deliver you up be not anxious how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak”; and I prayed with all my heart, “O God, give me an answer.” Without a moment’s hesitation I replied, and the answer came so distinctly as an answer to the prayer and was so far beyond what I alone was capable of saying that I feel it a duty to put it on record:—

“Your Excellency, if you will permit me I will use your own illustration; I will make a little change in it, I will call you the king; you have a son who is a friend of mine and loves me; I am in prison for a debt to the Government on which I

## IN TURKEY

cannot pay one in a thousand. Your son comes to you and says, ‘Father, my friend is in prison for debt; can you not pardon and release him?’ You reply, ‘My son, I too love him and do not want him to be in prison, but I cannot pardon him, for if I did I should be wronging the whole people. I must treat all alike.’ ‘Well, Father, will you let me pay his debt and he go free?’ ‘Yes, my son, if he will accept it I will not only let you pay the debt, but I will participate with you.’

“The son, without waiting to ask whether I accept or not, goes at once to the proper office, pays the debt, and it is marked on the books that my debt is paid. He receives a receipt upon which is the Government seal stating that my debt is paid, and now I am free. But I do not know it. Then he comes to the prison with the receipt and says, ‘Rise, Brother, you are free, your debt is paid, I have paid it.’

“I may take one of three courses. I may draw myself up haughtily and say, ‘No, I will not accept it, I will not be under obligation to any one!’ forgetting that, being in debt, I am already under obligation and this would be but a shifting of the obligation. Should I do this I would un-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

necessarily wound one who for love of me has already made a great sacrifice which cannot be taken back. It is on record that my debt *is*, not that it *will be*, paid; to refuse would be unworthy of me.

"But I might sit moping, with my head in my hands, and say, 'I wish it were so! But I cannot believe it.' 'But I tell you it is so; see, here is the receipt. Get out of the prison and test it,' he might say. 'No, I dare not, the police might find me and take me back to greater shame!'

"Should he force me from the prison, how would I behave? Not believing in my heart that I was free, I would look sharply this way and that in the street, lest a policeman might see me; should I escape to my house I would not dare to go near the door nor the window lest some one see my shadow and betray me to the police, and imprisonment in my house would be worse than imprisonment in the prison. Without faith, or belief, in the heart there is no liberty. This, too, would be ungrateful.

"The third thing I might do and ought to do, when he tells me he has paid my debt and I am free, is to fall at his feet and say, 'I thank you. I have nothing to give in return,'—since

## IN TURKEY

my pennies to his pounds would be an insult,— ‘but I shall endeavor by my life to show my thanks.’

“Then I would go out of prison, as they did on Liberty Day when Abdul Hamid was deposed and all the prisons were thrown open; every man was free; men who were sentenced to be hanged, those who were imprisoned for life, or were confined, hopeless, for debt, rushed into the street shouting, ‘Azad! Azad!’ (Free! Free!) It would be joy to me to tell every one that I was free and who set me free.

“But this is not all—instead of letting me return to my hovel where there is nothing but poverty he takes me to his beautiful home. There he gives me the Hamam [Turkish bath], the most thorough cleansing known. My prison clothes with all their filth are thrown into the fire, and that is the end of my past life. Then he brings me his own beautiful garments of colored broadcloth and silk, and, clothed as a prince, he brings me to you, O King, and says, ‘Father, this is my brother!’ And you say, ‘Come, my son, from this day you are my son. You shall take my name upon you; I will entrust it to you and you will honor it. In my name

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

you shall go in and out; all that I have is yours; you shall share it with your elder brother.'

"This," I said, "is as I understand Christianity. God is the King. Jesus Christ, his Son, paid my debt and yours, too, yours just as much as mine. *I* believe it and know I am free; if *you* will believe it, it will mean as much to you as it does to me.

"Now," I said, "what will be my attitude toward the Prince? I see him coming down one of the narrow streets on horseback; some one has dumped a load of firewood in the street, filling it up; he cannot pass, what shall I do? Wait until he comes and say, 'What will you give me to remove this obstruction from your way?' Or will I not, as soon as I see him coming, set to work with all my might to remove the obstruction, and then, when he passes, step aside and salute him with joy, glad that I have been able to do something to show my gratitude for what he has done for me? If he should offer to pay me, I would say, 'No, I did not do it for pay. I rejoice that I can do something to show my appreciation of what you have already done for me.'"

"So!" said the Vali, knitting his brow; "and do you mean to tell me that the hospital and

## IN TURKEY

schools you have here are to show your gratitude to God for something He has already done for you, and not for the purpose of winning some new favor from God?"

"Yes, sir, exactly."

"Well, I had not thought of it so before."

We all sat silent about the table until Sir Ahmed arose; then those on the right passed toward the reception-room door and waited there for the Vali to enter first; those on the left passed down the length of the table and around the end toward the rest. Just as I reached the farther end of the table Sir Ahmed, who was still standing at the head, threw up his hand, and all stood silent and motionless. Then, pointing his finger at me, with flashing eyes he sternly said, "But, Doctor Ussher, you say 'Jesus Christ, the Son of God.' God is one; He neither begets nor is begotten; how can you say the Son of God?"

The scene was dramatic. It was as if I stood before a court. I replied:—

"Your Excellency, I am talking to you in your language. If I were talking to you in my language, English, I should be able to say to you things which I cannot say in Turkish, because your language has neither the word nor the

#### AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

thought. For instance, in a little while I shall say to you [and I said it in English], ‘I am going home.’ When I translate that into Turkish I have to say, ‘Ava giderim’ [I am going to the house], and then I must explain that when I say I am going to the house I do not mean that I am going to the building. I mean I am going where there is a companion, a family, love; where every member of the household thinks unselfishly for every other member—to the sweetest place on earth. By a long process I must explain to you that when I use your word I mean something different from what you have always understood by it.

“When God talks to man He uses man’s language and is limited by it. He uses our words and then, perhaps by a long process, explains that He means something different from what we have been accustomed to understand from them. When God speaks of Jesus as his *Son*, He uses the best term that we have, but He does not mean simply a man born of a woman, as we have been accustomed to understand the word.”

Here our conversation was interrupted, to be resumed when I went to pay my dinner call the following Friday morning. We were sitting

## IN TURKEY

with a window between us and the sun was shining into the room. I put my hand into the ray of light and asked:—

“Your Excellency, what is this?”

“Why, that is the sun,” he replied, in a tone of surprise.

“Is *this* the sun, or is that it which we see up there in the sky?”

“There is no difference; it is all the one light.”

“Well, is that the sun that we see, or is there a body back of it that no man has seen at any time, but the light declares it?”

“Yes, I suppose there is a body that we know through the light.”

“Is there one sun, or two? Which is the sun?”

“One sun, they are inseparable.”

“Now,” I said, “when I put my hand in the light I feel something; what is it?”

“It is the sun.”

“Yes,” said I; “it is a power that goes down into the blackness and death of the earth, takes hold of the life in the seed, and brings up the beautiful grass and flowers and trees. What is it?”

“It is the sun; without the sun there is no life.”

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

“Your Excellency, is there one sun, or three suns?”

“One sun.”

“Which is the sun, the light, the body, or the power?”

“It is all one and inseparable.”

“Well, Your Excellency, if you have no difficulty in recognizing a trinity in the sun with three things so distinct as the light, the body, and the power, why should you have difficulty in recognizing a trinity in the Godhead? God loved man and wished to manifest Himself to him. The manifestation of Himself He calls his Son, just as your poets speak of the light as the son of the orb; and your Koran speaks of Jesus as ‘Noor Allah’ [Light of God] and ‘Ruh Allah’ [Spirit of God]. We Christians do not worship three gods as you accuse us of doing, but one God; God the Father, ‘whom no man hath seen at any time’; God the Son, who said, ‘He that hath seen me hath seen the Father’; and God the Spirit, the power or influence that comes from the Father and the Son into your heart and mine and teaches us what He wants us to be and do—all One Inseparable God.”

There were no more threats of deportation,

## IN TURKEY

and before a great while the Turks of Van made complaint to Constantinople that the Vali was too friendly to the Christians. He was removed from his position, but being a man of great power and ability he rose again and became Vali of the most important province in Turkey. When the order was given from Constantinople to deport and destroy the Armenians he refused absolutely to obey. He gave up a very large salary and allowed himself to be banished to the interior of Turkey rather than be a party to the crime. He never made any profession of being a Christian, yet I cannot but believe that the conversations here reported had much to do with his change of attitude.

## CHAPTER XII

### “A CONFERENCE OF THE POWERS”

WITH apologies to Kipling I will in this chapter briefly describe the business meeting of our mission in 1911, and a few of the events of the succeeding two years, including the meeting of 1913.

The A.B.C.F.M. is the only board conducting general missionary work in Turkey. Its stations are grouped for convenience in missions. The Eastern Turkey Mission comprised the stations of Van, Erzerum, Harput, Bitlis, Mardin, and Diarbekir. At the close of each school and fiscal year a meeting was held in one of these stations, to which delegates were sent by the others.<sup>1</sup> Here the work of the year just past was reported, the mission's policy for the year to come was outlined, difficult problems discussed, and, stiffer work of all, the money available for the work of the year was divided as

<sup>1</sup> A meeting was supposed to be held each year, but in the '90's with their massacres there was a long hiatus, and another in the first decade of the present century.

## IN TURKEY<sup>1</sup>

justly as possible among the stations and their various departments of work. Although our Board is a Congregational Board, fifty-eight per cent of its missionaries represent a number of other denominations; in the E.T.M. there were Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Disciples, Episcopalian, and Lutherans, all working together in perfect harmony, with no reference to differences in creed or ritual.

Our place of meeting in 1911 was unusual. Bitlis station had moved out to its summer camp three miles from the city, to spend the six weeks' vacation from school work. Delegates were invited to bring along traveling tents, which were pitched on a small terrace, the highest of a series climbing a steep mountain-side; our daily sessions were held under an enormous and ancient English-walnut tree and our diversions included mountain-climbing before sunrise, and bathing in the ice-cold waters of the Sindian Su below.

I was a delegate to this meeting, for I made a practice of closing my hospital during the hottest weeks of summer, its one physician and one set of nurses needing rest, and the build-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

ing itself requiring periodical house-cleaning and renovation.

Leaving Bitlis, a few of the visitors turned aside to see Nimrud, the most remarkable extinct volcano in the world. Climbing to a height of approximately ten thousand feet, one stands on the rim of a crater nearly five miles in diameter. Its circumference forms a perfect and gigantic circle; the walls are cliffs rising in some places to a height of two thousand feet above the floor of the crater, the western half of which is a lake, the eastern half composed of old lava streams covered with pumice or bristling with crags. Riding around the circumference of fourteen and a half miles one looks down upon a vast map of the country: the great plain of Mush, gray and dim, stretching far westward; a rampart of mountains closing in the northern horizon at an immense distance; a plateau of lava shelving gently downward to Lake Van in the east; in the south the serried Kurdish ranges.

I went on to Persia to meet my sister, who was coming out to make her home with us. Garabed, my surgical nurse, begged to be allowed to go with me. On the return trip our *guard* left us at Salmast because he heard there had been a large

## IN TURKEY

caravan held up and robbed of thirty-six animals with their loads the day before on the road over which we were to pass. Near the scene of this robbery three brigands, who evidently had an understanding with our Turkish muleteer, demanded "safety" money, and when refused tried to make off with our load animal and his load. Garabed's quick-wittedness saved the day. He had no weapon, but, seeing one of the three leveling his rifle at me from behind a rock twenty yards away, he flung himself down behind a stone the size of a man's hat and, pulling my water-bottle around his left side, pointed his forefinger at the man as if sighting a pistol. The robber, supposing it a weapon and knowing himself exposed on the side next Garabed, ran to a better shelter. I had out my pistol and before he could again level his rifle rode at him and made him walk out and march ahead of me, his companions not daring to fire at me while I had him covered. Thus we traveled to the border, where I let him go.

In the fall of 1912 I was summoned by wire to Bitlis and found there two patients in the missionary circle. One was Miss Mary Ely, for whose ailment a much lower altitude was im-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

peratively needed, so I took her part of the way to Mardin—being met halfway by other escort—where she spent the winter under the care of Dr. Thom. I then returned to my other patient, whom it seemed quite safe to leave in time to get home before Christmas. The motor-boat was to start on Monday afternoon, but when I arrived at Tadvan, the lake port six hours from Bitlis, it was not there, nor did it appear until Wednesday night, so that I spent my Christmas in a miserable village instead of in my own home or with the Bitlis friends. Just as the launch was starting at four o'clock in the morning a messenger from Bitlis hurried up to me. My patient had become suddenly worse the evening before, and this man had crossed the snow-covered Tadvan plain by night on the chance (much room for such a chance in Turkey!) of my not having been able to get away.

Miss Mary Ely died the following spring. Her sister lived to see, two years later, the massacre of the people for whom she had devotedly labored for forty-seven years.

In June, 1913, Miss Ely broke her arm. Summoned by wire I crossed in the motor-boat immediately, to find that eighteen hours after the ac-

## IN TURKEY

cident the broken bones had been set by a Turk-  
ish army surgeon who happened to be passing  
through Bitlis on his way to Mush to investigate  
the typhus epidemic among the soldiers there.  
The bone had to be reset, however, a little later.  
Then I departed, leaving a hospital nurse from  
Van with my patient, but took the trip again two  
weeks later to remove the cast and see how the  
arm was getting along.

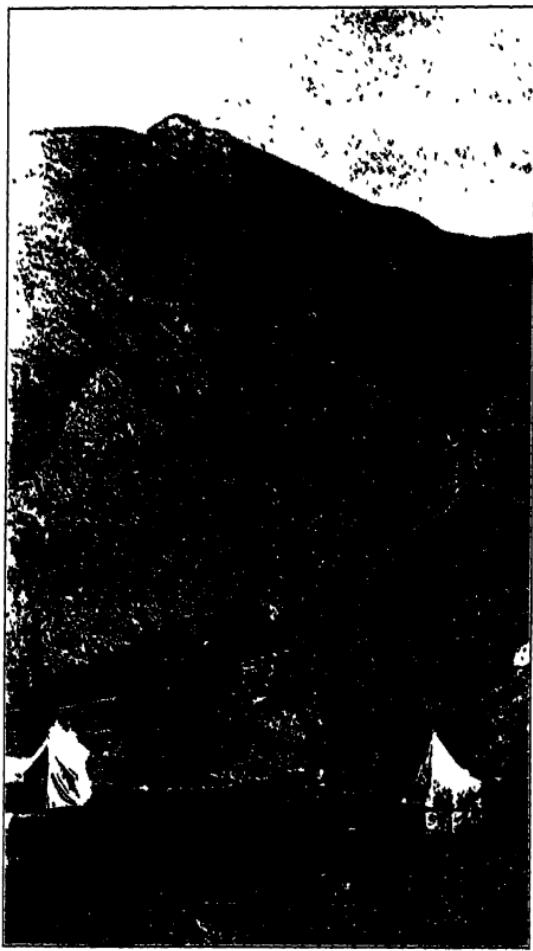
It was nearly time for our annual meeting,  
which was to be held at Van, or, rather, at our  
summer camp near Artamid, nine miles from the  
city, so the Harput delegate, who had reached  
Bitlis by this time, the Bitlis delegates,<sup>1</sup> and I,  
crossed the lake together. Something usually  
went wrong with the motor-boat on these trips,  
but on this occasion all was well. We started at  
eight in the evening and in the light of a full  
moon glided over a sea like glass. The southern  
mountains in shadow rose black and almost sheer  
above us. Not far from Tadvan is a bay, almost

<sup>1</sup> One of the Bitlis delegates was the Reverend George P. Knapp, missionary in Turkey for twenty-five years, who died in Diarbekir two years later. There is no doubt in the minds of consuls or missionaries conversant with the circumstances, that he was done to death by the officials of the Turkish Government, because he had been a witness of the atrocities in Bitlis, and because of his efforts to save the despised Armenians.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

a complete circle, which is the sunken crater of an extinct volcano. In the solid rock of its steep, high sides were cut dwellings, a whole village of them,—a village of sheikhs,—which was a veritable city of refuge, for no man seeking their protection was ever given up by these sheikhs to the law or to the avenger of blood. We went into this crater to look at the rock dwellings, then rolled ourselves up in steamer rugs and slept on the bare deck, waking with the dawn and ready to jump down upon the shingly beach when the boat reached Artamid at six o'clock.

The frequent heavy gales that swept the lake made tents impracticable and uneconomical, so the greater part of our Van circle camped out in picnicky fashion in a house of sun-dried brick and plaster very near the shore. American and English children cannot stand the foul atmosphere of Oriental cities during the hot season; babies wilt in it like flowers in the fierce heat of noon; so missionary families make a practice of living in the country for a few weeks in summer. The Yarrow youngsters and ours had glorious times together, swimming in the lake, racing on the beaches, living an outdoor life that stored up health and vitality for the winter. Far from the



SUMMER CAMP NEAR BITLIS



## IN TURKEY

world of "movies," soda-fountains, playgrounds, and toy-shops, they had to invent their own amusements, and I was much diverted one Fourth of July by their exhibition of fireworks — I found them burning the celluloid handle of a discarded toothbrush and admiring the splendid sputtering flame.

Lake Van is one of the most remarkable lakes in the world, on account of its steady rise, its fluctuations of level, and the composition of its waters, which are heavily charged with carbonate of soda and other salts. The village women can and do wash clothes in the lake without the use of soap. It bleached my boys' brown heads to tow color every summer, and gave the black hair of Armenian bathers a reddish tinge.

The view from our summer camp was superb. The lake, a deep brilliant blue during the day, took on delicate tints in the twilight of evening and early morning. Sipan Dagh raised its magnificent dome at our right as we faced the west; at our left across the bay was the green promontory where Artamid's apricot, cherry, and mulberry orchards quite concealed its brown mud houses; beyond were mountains so bare and boldly hewn that in winter they seemed carved

**AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN**

by a master sculptor in glistening white marble,  
but at dawn in summer-time they were a velvety  
pale pink shading into lavender, and deepening  
into purple under the noonday sun.

## CHAPTER XIII

### TYPHUS IN THE GARRISON

AT the close of the annual meeting Dr. Henry H. Atkinson,<sup>1</sup> of Harput, and I left to attend the triennial session of the Medical Missionary Association of Turkey in Jerusalem. We crossed the lake in the motor-launch, spent the night at Bitlis, and the next day started south, following the Bitlis Su, a branch of the Tigris, over the route traversed by Xenophon and his Ten Thousand. The descent from the plateau is so abrupt that in six hours after leaving the city—where twenty feet of snow during the winter is the usual thing—one reaches a land of perpetual summer. The road is like a giant staircase.

Near the left bank of the Redwan River we came upon strange mounds marking what had once been the walls and houses of a large city.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Atkinson died of typhus in 1915. His wife, although not a trained physician, kept his hospital open and continued his work for both Christian and Moslem through the terrible months following the deportations and massacres. She has just (August, 1917) returned to America.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Our zabtieh told us the following legend: Two brothers who were kings determined to build strong cities; one said he would build a city which neither man nor devil could destroy, and he constructed the marvelous fortifications of Diarbekir which abide to this day. The other said he would build a city which neither god, man, nor devil could destroy—these bare and desolate earth mounds covered its ruins.

We arrived in Diarbekir five days after leaving Bitlis. It is a walled city built entirely of stone, most of it black. Floors and courtyards are paved with the same material, the dead black enlivened here and there by slabs of white marble. We were the guests over Sunday of Dr. Vosgian Topalian, an Armenian surgeon of marked ability who had received much of his medical training in England. He had been acting British Vice-Consul in Diarbekir at one time. The home life of himself, his cultured wife, and three charming children was delightful.

Diarbekir was famed for its watermelons. The season for these was not sufficiently advanced for the largest melons to be obtainable, but I measured in the market one that was over two and a half feet long and fifty inches in circumference,

## IN TURKEY

and could readily believe their story that sometimes two melons would make a camel-load. The seeds are planted in holes two feet deep in the river-bed, about six feet from the water's edge when the river is high. As the water subsides sufficient moisture finds its way to these pits to cause a luxuriant growth, so rapid that the flesh of the enormous melons is as crisp, sweet, and red as that of our smaller fruit.

In Urfa we were entertained at the orphanage camp by Mr. Gracey and the German missionaries. The Messrs. Lawrence, under the auspices of the British Museum, were excavating the ruins of ancient Carchemish at Jerablous. Here, in a desert and almost uninhabited region, the Germans had erected extensive and elaborate buildings.

In Aleppo we were the guests of Dr. Altoo-nian, one of the foremost Armenian surgeons in Turkey. His was a modern and elaborate hospital, with several English trained nurses, and a fine electrical outfit in charge of a British trained mechanic. It would compare favorably with private hospitals in Europe and America.

Near Beirut we spent a few delightful hours in the home of Dr. E. St. John Ward, Professor

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

of Surgery in the Syrian Protestant College and president of the Medical Missionary Association of Turkey. Then I looked up a young Armenian whom I had sent from Van to this college to study medicine. His professors spoke in the highest terms of his ability and character. His influence among his fellow-students was such that they hoped if we had any more men like him we would send them along. We have had similar testimony from other colleges to which our Van boys have gone.

In Jerusalem we were met at the station by a committee of the foreign physicians of the city and were escorted to headquarters. I had traveled the greatest distance—nearly the whole breadth of the Turkish Empire—to attend the conference, so was shown special courtesies. The program well repaid me for the long journey. It had been so arranged as to give us some afternoon trips under the guidance of Dr. Masterman, probably the best living authority on Jerusalem.

My generous host was Dr. Thompson, one of the surgeons in charge of the British Ophthalmic Hospital. He was ill for several days after the meetings were over and I had the privilege of

## IN TURKEY

taking charge of his clinic. I prolonged my stay for the sake of study in the International Institute of Hygiene under Professor Karl Much, of Hamburg, a noted specialist in the treatment of tuberculosis. Another German specialist gave a valuable course in studies of the blood and the diagnosis of malaria.

One of my experiences in Jerusalem is described in the next chapter. On my return journey I spent a week in the hospitals of Beirut and a helpful week with Dr. Shephard,<sup>1</sup> of Aintab.

At Aleppo I met again Dr. Graeder, teacher in the German Government High School, who, during a vacation tour with a fellow-teacher that summer, had visited Van and had been a guest of the Spörries. Not long after our departure from Van his chum had died of typhus contracted in Bitlis, where he had occupied the room in a so-called hotel in which had died one of the Turkish physicians sent to investigate the disease which was decimating the garrison at Mush. Dr. Graeder's story and subsequent investigation on my part went far to confirm in my

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Shephard died of typhus in 1915. The story of his remarkable life-work is briefly told in a little pamphlet, "Shephard of Aintab," published by the American Board.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

mind the theory that the disease is conveyed by the body louse. I doubt if any native of Aleppo knew as much about the city as did Dr. Graeder; he had made a practice of exploring a different street every day, had acquired a large fund of information, and, escorting us everywhere, made our visit intensely interesting.

From Birejik to Diarbekir I had as traveling companion Lieutenant Young, of the British army in India, whom I had met in Damascus. He was planning to travel on a raft of inflated skins down the Tigris to the Persian Gulf and take ship there for India.

In Birejik I was told the story of the British Consul FitzMaurice, who in 1909, knowing that the Turks were about to begin a massacre in the city, came post-haste from Aleppo to balk their plans. The ferries were all on the eastern side of the Euphrates River and would not cross to the western side for him. Nothing daunted, he flung off all his clothes but his shirt, swam the river, and, single-handed, prevented the massacre.

In Diarbekir I found a telegram asking me to wait there for a new missionary, Miss Shane,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Miss Shane has been through some terrible experiences in the last

## IN TURKEY

and escort her to Bitlis. On this trip I again broke a few ribs, this time, also, in a peculiar manner. We were riding on the top of light loads, and one day, after walking some time, I attempted to mount my horse from the hillside and gave a spring calculated to land me in the middle of the load. But my muleteer gave me an unexpected boost; he meant well, but the added impulse sent me over the horse and down a steep bank upon the ragged edge of a tree-stump.

There were some changes in the personnel of our station that year. Dr. Raynolds, having been elected president of our newly chartered Van College, went to America in its interests. Mrs. Raynolds decided to remain behind and continue her work among the Armenian women. Mr. and Mrs. Yarrow returned from their furlough with their three children. Miss Knapp, having broken down under the strain of the year's events in Bitlis, came to Van to be under the oversight of a physician and taught in our girls' school for two years. Last, but not least, Richard Beverly three years, which she may some time relate. She has just (October, 1917) returned to the United States.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Ussher and Ernest Albert Yarrow, Jr., joined our forces, the one in November, the other in the following March, and if they contributed no wisdom to our councils they strengthened our hands and our hearts.

The winter proved a busy one. Typhus, as yet undiagnosed, was working havoc among the soldiers of the garrison at Van, as it had the previous spring in the garrison at Mush. I had suspected the nature of the epidemic at Mush and had communicated my suspicions to our Vali, unaware of the fact that the military physicians sent to investigate it had reported the disease as something other than typhus. Thus, quite unwittingly, I had made these physicians my enemies.

In the military hospital the men were lying so close to each other that when a man rose from his bed he had difficulty in crowding back into it again. Yet, although I offered to take as many as we had room for into my hospital, the offer was refused. Meanwhile the disease was being spread through the city by the soldiers. A Turkish lieutenant had been ill four days in a civilian's house unattended, his military physician being himself ill. He called me and begged me to take

## IN TURKEY

him into my hospital. His captain came then accompanied by a Turkish physician and with curses and threats ordered him to get up and go to the military hospital. The lieutenant, whose temperature at the time was 106 degrees, refused to go. They then threatened to take him by force, whereupon he appealed to me for protection and I assured him that so long as he wished to stay he should remain unmolested. He replied that if he died there he preferred it to getting well in the other hospital. He recovered, while practically all his comrades who were ill in the military hospital died.

Then one of the leading surgeons in the army was taken sick and it was rumored that he was dying. I had just been to a village and back through snow so deep that the struggles of myself and horse had caused a dislocation of the spine. I was almost paralyzed from the waist down and was unable to turn myself in bed, but I wrote a card to the physician in charge of the chief surgeon's case, suggesting a treatment which we had found beneficial. The physician to whom I wrote had succumbed to the malady himself that day and felt sure he would die. He came post-haste to our hospital and demanded

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

the treatment immediately. Because he did not receive it at once, he seized his Armenian nurse by the throat and would have killed her but for the timely arrival of a male nurse who threw him on the bed and, escaping with the girl, closed and held the door. The enraged doctor thrust his fist through the door panel, but when Miss Bond came and quietly, but firmly, ordered him to bed, he was as docile as a kitten. He recovered and became a warm friend of ours.

I was confined to my bed for three weeks. During that time many Turkish officers and doctors came to our hospital and all recovered but one, who was badly cyanosed when brought there. Most of the credit for saving these was due to Miss Bond and the faithful Armenian nurses. Neo Salvarsan given but once seemed to control the violent delirium, and calcium sulphide grains one-sixth every two hours, with heart tonics and baths as necessary, kept the mortality in our hospital down to two per cent of all our cases, while in the military hospital the mortality was seventy-five per cent.

Few of the common soldiers were permitted to come to us, however, and twenty-eight hundred out of a garrison of forty-five hundred died.

## IN TURKEY

Earlier in the winter I had written to the general, offering to eradicate the disease in two weeks if my directions were followed, but the offer was refused. Distressed at the large number of deaths among the soldiers far from home and kindred, I wrote to a friend in Constantinople in close touch with the higher officials, telling him of the conditions, and soon new officers and doctors were sent from the Capital to combat the epidemic.

The new physicians had been directed to go first to the American doctor and do whatever he said. They came to me as I still lay in bed and, following my suggestions, stamped out the disease within two weeks.

Afterwards Tahsin Pasha, our Vali, sent me an official note of thanks for what we had done for the officers and the people during the pestilence.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE KAISER'S PALACE IN JERUSALEM

IN 1898 Kaiser Wilhelm visited Abdul Hamid, the Arch-Murderer. The massacre of about a hundred thousand defenseless Armenians in 1895 and 1896 had filled Europe and America with horror and repulsion, and the Turk, if ever he needed a friend, needed one then. During this visit the Kaiser said, "Our greatest German scholar, Haeckel, is a Unitarian, and before long all the German people will be like the Turks."<sup>1</sup> He said this in one of the most sacred places of the Mohammedans, in which, according to their belief, the teller of a falsehood will be smitten with a curse and fall dead. The Turks understood him to mean that before long all German people would become Mohammedans, and published his phrase in that form. He did not consider it expedient to correct this misapprehension.

<sup>1</sup> He undoubtedly meant that they would all come to a disbelief in the divinity of Christ. The Moslem considers Christ merely a prophet and a lesser prophet than Mohammed. But the phrase was probably purposely ambiguous.

## IN TURKEY

Later, German Christian missions in Turkey were subsidized by the German Government, which also supported official high schools there, located, as Rohrbach said they were to be, where they would need the protection of German soldiers. Germans largely trained and officered the Turkish army, and Turkish officials were kept fully informed of Prussia's plans.

When in 1911 the Morocco dispute was causing anxiety in Europe, the Turkish garrison in Van was increased from eight regiments to thirty-two. The Turks became more arrogant and oppressive than ever before, and it was first rumored, and then very definitely stated, that there would soon be a massacre of all Christians in Turkey. Russia was asked to be responsible for the safety of foreigners in eastern Turkey. She accordingly sent an army division, peace strength, into Persia, the northern part of which she was policing. This army was located about sixty miles from Van and was held in readiness to advance at the first intimation of danger.

As I have already said, the Van plateau is at an altitude of fifty-five hundred feet, and the snow-fall is very heavy everywhere except in the Van plain, which is sheltered by the mountains. I

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

have often ridden my horse over the telegraph wires on the crust. The Turks call these snows — fifteen to twenty-five feet in a winter — “the white police,” believing them a protection against invasion. The Russian general, thinking that the Turks would await the aid of their white police before beginning the holy war, bought up all the carpets and felts obtainable in northern Persia, with the idea of laying them on the snow, marching troops over them, and thus packing a road over which he could take his heavy artillery.

Suddenly, on February 9, 1912, the Morocco dispute was settled, Germany withdrew her demands, and immediately the thirty-two Turkish regiments in Van were disbanded, rumors of massacre ceased, and the Turkish attitude toward the Armenians grew exceedingly friendly. Whereupon the Russian army was withdrawn from the border.

In 1913, on my way to the meeting of the Medical Missionary Association of Turkey in Jerusalem, I visited Jaffa. From Jaffa I saw in the distance a high tower, and, on inquiring what it was, was informed that it was the tower of the German hospice on the Mount of Olives. I gained access to the building and found it a

## IN TURKEY

magnificent and palatial structure covering several acres of ground. There was in it a large throne-room with a raised dais and behind this a beautiful mosaic picture of Frederick Barbarossa with his beard grown through a table as in the legend. On the right-hand wall was the portrait of the Empress of Germany and on the left-hand wall the royal arms of Prussia. There was a powerful searchlight in the tower which commanded a view of the Mediterranean, the Dead Sea, and the River Jordan. It was whispered to me that there were cannon in the basement, smuggled in as "machinery," and from the tower was pointed out to me a double row of wire entanglements about the building.

Surprised and puzzled by all this, I said: "Tell me truly. I cannot believe that so elaborate and costly a building is meant simply as an inn for pilgrims. Who built it? What is its ultimate purpose?"

They informed me that it had been built and paid for by Kaiser Wilhelm and dedicated by the Crown Prince a few months previously. When again I inquired its ultimate purpose, I was told it was to be, "First, the palace of the German Governor of Palestine."

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

"And then?" I queried; "and then?"

"And then of the Kaiser himself, from which he will rule his world-kingdom."

I laughed at this point and got no further information.

I considered their final statement so absurd that I did not even discuss it with my English friends in Jerusalem, and ridiculed it in my letters home—of which fact I have been reminded since I came to America. I thought differently about the incident two years later when I read Rohrbach's "German World Policies," in which he argues that the Turks and the Germans are the same race and ought to be together, and in which he outlines Germany's plan for Turkey. From perusal of this and of Bernhardi's "Britain as a Vassal of Germany," "I Accuse," by a German, and Van Houtte's "The Pan-Germanic Crime," I was persuaded that the cry "Berlin to Bagdad" did not mean a railroad, but Prussian rule from Berlin to Bagdad as a preliminary to world-rule.

In July, 1914, a Turkish Vali told one of our American missionaries in Harput that a general European war was about to begin. The Turkish army was mobilizing even then.

## IN TURKEY

The following chapters relate what took place in the city and province of Van during the remainder of 1914 and in 1915; in the latter year began the massacres and deportations in other provinces of Turkey. That the deportations were planned by the Prussian Government cannot be doubted by any one who has had first-hand knowledge concerning them. If Germany was to rule Turkey in the end, she would avoid trouble with the progressive and nationalistic Armenians by scattering them among the Turks. She followed the policy she had followed in France in the early days of the war and which she has since followed in Belgium: any territory occupied by her must be rid of its original inhabitants, or they must be so scattered as to form no longer a homogeneous population.

Germany was also largely responsible for the massacres and atrocities that accompanied the deportations. At Surp Garabed Monastery, near Mush, a German officer was in command of the artillery which overcame the Armenians who were defending their women and children. When they were disarmed and huddled into the courtyard of the monastery, this officer mounted the wall and harangued them, upbraiding them

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

for their lack of loyalty to Turkey and her allies; then, by firing a pistol, gave the signal to the Turks to slaughter the three thousand men, women, and children gathered there.

A Turkish officer once protested to me against the phrase "the unspeakable Turk." "The Christians are more cruel than the Turks," said he; "the German Government is a Christian Government, is it not?"

"No," I replied; "there is no Christian Government in the world. There are Christians in all governments, but no Christian Government."

He insisted that the Germans were Christians, but that the orders given by German officers surpassed in barbarity anything even thought of by the Turk. The general order given to Turkish officers by their Prussian superiors, he said, was, "Spare nothing to injure and horrify your enemy," and the detailed directions were such as to fill even a Turk with loathing.<sup>1</sup>

By orders of the German Ambassador in Con-

<sup>1</sup> Compare with the words of William I to his troops in the Franco-Prussian War: "We are not making war on the peaceable citizens of France, and the first duty of the loyal soldier is to protect private property, and not let the high reputation of our army be stained by the commission of any isolated lack of discipline. I expect of you that you will conduct yourselves with honor in the enemy's country."

## IN TURKEY

stantinople German missionaries were instructed to turn the Armenian orphans under their care out into the streets. The head of one such orphanage tried to save from this fate her Armenian teachers, who were college graduates, refined and attractive. She received this telegram from the German Consul at ——: "I hear you have hidden some Armenian girls in your house. You have no right to do such a thing. Give them up at once." She undertook a difficult and dangerous journey to plead personally with the Ambassador, but had to wait a week for an audience with him; and then his only reply to her was a gruff, "Mind your own business." She was obliged to turn those beautiful young women over to the Turkish soldiers.

Because German missionaries in Turkey have tried to save the lives of Armenian women and children, both they and the officers of their boards in Germany have been persecuted by their own Government.

Four fine young Germans in charge of a high school in Aleppo sent to their Government a letter of protest against what was being done in the name of Germany under their very eyes and throughout Turkey. It was also sent to a reli-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

gious periodical. When copied by a secular paper, it was seen by the censor and the whole issue of that paper was confiscated by him, with the exception of a few copies that had got out of the country. This letter and the reports of some of their missionaries so aroused German people at home that the Ambassador at Constantinople was removed and "a sympathetic, refined Christian gentleman," a Roman Catholic, was sent to take his place. Nevertheless, for writing this noble protest one of those young men now languishes in a German prison; another barely escaped with his life to a neutral country with a price put on his head.

For sixteen years my work brought me into rather close contact with German missionaries and officers of their boards, and acquaintance with their character, together with the experiences in 1912 and 1913, which I have related, has enabled me to view without very great surprise the events of the last three years, and to maintain, nevertheless, my faith in the sincerity and goodness of the German people.<sup>1</sup> But has not the Jesuitical doctrine, "The end justifies the means," outlived in Germany the Reformation? Has it

<sup>1</sup> Yet see Appendix B.

## IN TURKEY

not been instilled into all her people from youth up and become a part of their moral fiber? It would seem so in the case of the Germans I have known. In their business relations they were clever, hard, unscrupulous, considering all contracts, agreements, and promises mere "scraps of paper" whenever it seemed to their interest to do so. In their other relations they were self-sacrificing and generous. Their Christian Man and their Business Man did not live in the same house, and, so they seemed to think, were not even related to each other. Yet I cannot speak too highly of their devotion to their work and to the people they worked for. Some of them risked their lives for the Armenians.

In a former chapter I have written of our turning over our Armenian orphans to the care of Germans sent out by the Deutsches Hülfbund. The premises of this German mission were one third of a mile east of ours on the edge of Varak plain. At the time of which I am about to write it was composed of Herr and Frau Spörri and their daughter Irene, of Schwestern Anna and Kathe, and Schwester Martha Kleiss, who was a practical nurse. I was their physician and the physician of their orphans. We had the most

## **AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN**

pleasant social relations with them, appreciating fully the worth of their earnest, devout Christian characters. And we owe them a great debt of gratitude for their ministry to us in a time of sore need.

## CHAPTER XV.

1914

IN July, 1914, Miss McLaren, Miss Rogers, and I attended as the delegates from Van the annual meeting of the Eastern Turkey Mission at Harput. At Diarbekir the delegates from Bitlis, Mr. and Mrs. Maynard and Miss Uline, joined us. It was during our brief stay in Harput that the Vali made the statement concerning the coming European war which I mentioned in the last chapter.

We left Harput the last day of July. As we were crossing the great plain we heard the sound of galloping horses behind us. A troop of Turkish gendarmes overtook and passed us at full speed. Soon we came on evidences of what they were doing in the villages just ahead—sickles lying in half-cut fields of grain, sheaves of wheat dropped on the way to the stack, and a little later weeping women with bags of bread or clothing on their backs running to overtake their men, who had been taken from the fields without time allowed them to secure necessary

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

provisions from their homes or to say good-bye to their families. Conscription—for a war not yet declared!

We met a group of German and Turkish officers who had been traveling for some days on their way to Harput, cut off meantime from communication with the outside world. Yet they were eager for “news of the war!”

Throughout the remainder of our twelve days' journey we saw this conscription going on. In the mountain passes near Mush we met troops of recruits parched with thirst, eager to know how far it was to the next spring of water. We were informed that at Mush our hired horses would be requisitioned. I considered that until we reached Van these horses were ours, and therefore as the property of foreigners, immune from requisition, as I had hired them for the round trip to Harput and back and had already paid most of the money. We left the main road at the entrance to the city, plunged into a canyon which we followed till we reached a point far above Mush, and there left our effects, descending on foot into the city to visit our Protestant friends. The next day, Sunday, we heard that soldiers were searching diligently for our animals.

## IN TURKEY

The Bitlis delegates had left Harput two days later than we did. Their hired horses were seized at Mush and Mr. and Mrs. Maynard and Miss Uline had to walk the remainder of the way to Bitlis, though they were permitted to hire an ox-cart for their baggage.

We saw a house burning in Patagantz, near Van. The gendarmes had entered the village with a list of all its men of military age. One man on this list was missing. He had gone up the mountain to cut wood. His widowed mother and sisters were caring for a sick brother. They sent after Bedros and assured the gendarmes he would be back in half an hour. The gendarmes would not wait half an hour. Declaring him a deserter and saying they had orders to burn the houses of deserters, they sprinkled kerosene about his house, set fire to it, and rode off.

At Artemid, nine miles from Van, we were informed that all horses and mules entering Van were being commandeered. Two of my mule-teers thereupon took their animals away to a village to hide them. The others stayed with us. My wife and Miss Silliman had driven down in two of our carts to help us, and we entered the city after dark without incident.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

In Van we found conscription going on and the people in a panic. The drafted men had been told to bring five days' rations with them, but had been given no time to provide themselves with these rations, and came into the city starving. On my professional rounds I often passed recruiting stations and would see these men drawn up in line, standing for hours in the scorching sun, while officers entered on registration blanks all statistics required by the Prussian Government of its own army. Many fainted where they stood from hunger and exhaustion.

There was no food or equipment for the reserves or for these troops, and no suitable material for uniforms. All kinds of cloth found in the shops was requisitioned and I once counted twenty-two sorts of material in the uniforms of a group of sixty soldiers. We saw recruits drilling in motley array, and in October watched ten thousand of them march toward Erzerum.

All males between the ages of twenty and forty-five were required to register. By law ecclesiastics and teachers and those with aged parents, orphaned brothers and sisters, or orphan wives to support, were exempt from service. A few months later they began to draft these men

## IN TURKEY

too. An exemption fee of forty-three pounds might be paid, but this fee was beyond the means of the great mass of people, and sometimes men were taken who had paid it.

Many Turks and Kurds and a much smaller proportion of Armenians would not register and were considered deserters. Very many Armenians enlisted willingly, glad of a chance to demonstrate their equality with the Turks, and these became brave and efficient soldiers. At Sarekamish on the Erzerum front the Russians drove the Turks back to Kupri Keuy, and I was informed by a Turkish officer that they there encountered Armenian regiments which hurled the Russians back across the border, capturing one of their cities. The Turkish general sent a telegram to the Vali of Van congratulating him on the valor of his Armenian troops.

A week after this battle orders were received from Enver Bey, Minister of War, to disarm all Armenians in the army. This proceeding led to the desertion of many. The disarmed soldiers, among whom were men of education and refinement, some of them graduates of noted American and English universities, were set to digging trenches and making roads. When the

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

makers of roads had finished their work, their Turkish officers, first circulating a report that they were in revolt, had groups of them surrounded and shot down. This action was not confined to the province of Van; it was so general as to make one more than suspect secret orders from Constantinople. It led to further desertions and deterred many from enlisting who would otherwise have done so. These "slackers" were also called deserters. So were the few who had escaped by feigning death and afterward crawling out from under the corpses of their comrades. There were other instances—a number came to my knowledge—of officers putting to death their Armenian soldiers on some slight pretext or without any pretext whatever.

The following story is concerned, not with actual soldiers, but with soldiers about-to-be, and illustrates the nature of the "rebellions" reported to Constantinople. Twelve youths of Ereir not yet twenty years old were ordered by Turkish gendarmes to come to Van to register so as to be ready for the Government summons when they should reach the age for enlistment. After reassuring the anxious mothers and relatives with the most solemn oaths that no harm

## IN TURKEY

should befall the boys, these gendarmes took them to a little hollow in the hills a short distance from their homes and shot them all.

The people of Bairak, hearing of this, would not allow these same gendarmes to enter their village. The Government sent reinforcements and a Kurdish mob gathered to assist them. The villagers sent to Van for help. A band of Tashnagists came to their defense. A Turkish officer, unheeding the warning not to approach the village, encountered an Armenian sentry and was killed before the Armenians realized who he was. The Government, which had not anticipated any resistance, now perceived that it had gone too far and expressed regret for the murder of the boys. Thereupon the Tashnagist leaders exerted their influence and authority to prevent further bloodshed, punished the sentry, and what might have been a serious revolt was thus averted.

The Tashnagist leaders, Vremyan (member of the Ottoman Parliament), Aram, and Ishkhan, did all in their power to keep the peace throughout these months when the political situation was exceedingly complicated and the tension extreme. They knew themselves to be living in a powder magazine where the smallest spark

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

would cause an all-destructive explosion. An act of most justifiable self-defense might prove such a spark. So they told the Armenians to submit to anything rather than to antagonize the Government; to submit to the burning of two or three villages, the murder of a dozen men, without attempts at retaliation which would give the Turks some excuse for a general massacre. I shall relate later striking instances of their efforts in 1915 to prove to the Government the fact that the Armenians were its loyal subjects.

Meanwhile, in the early fall of 1914 the conscription and requisitioning brought about an economic crisis. Fuel could not be brought from other districts, kerosene, sugar, dry goods, could not be imported from Constantinople, because the means of transportation, pack-animals and ox-carts, had been seized by the Government. Provisions and clothing had been confiscated to supply the army. Yet the soldiers profited very little by this. They were poorly fed and poorly clothed when fed or clothed at all. The grain taken from the very threshing-floors, where it was being trampled out by oxen, was made into a coarse, black, soggy bread which soon moulded. It was then rebaked so hard that it could not be

## IN TURKEY

broken with hammer or stone. The families of men in active service were supposed to be given thirty piastres *per capita* a month, but the families of Armenian soldiers rarely received this.

I was speaking to the Vali one day in September about the injustice of some of the requisitioning from the Armenians, when he informed me that they would requisition from the Americans also. I told him that as our premises were extra-territorial by treaty right as well as by Trade of the Sultan, any violation of our premises would raise a question between our Government and the Ottoman Government.

"Poof! We are not afraid of America. America has no army. She could not enforce her demands."

"America had 'no army' when she went to war with Spain, but when McKinley sent out a call for one hundred thousand volunteers, two million applied in one day. And there might be more next time."

True enough! Not long after this conversation a quantity of drugs and hospital supplies, more than I had in stock, was demanded of me. I replied that, as the only civilian physician in the city of fifty thousand inhabitants, I must keep

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

enough to continue my work. Whatever I had over and above that I would gladly give or sell to the Government if needed.

A few days later, as I sat in my consulting-room in the dispensary, I heard a commotion in the drug-room. On entering I found an army physician (ranking captain), a police captain, and eight police ordering my druggist to bring up the supplies from the cellar, the trapdoor of which was open.

I greeted them courteously and asked, "What do you wish?"

"Why didn't you send us the things we ordered you to?" demanded the physician angrily.

"Pardon me, but you misunderstand our position. These premises are a part of America, extra-territorial by treaty right, and neutral."

"The capitulations are abolished."<sup>1</sup>

"That makes no difference; American rights are not dependent on the capitulations, but upon special treaties which cannot be abrogated without mutual consent, since America is not at war with Turkey."

<sup>1</sup> This was in September. The Ottoman Government had announced that the capitulations would be abolished the first of October, O.S. (October 14, N.S.). See Appendix A.

## IN TURKEY

Turning from me the captain again ordered my druggist to bring up the medicines. I stepped between, saying: "Pardon me, but as this man receives his salary from me he must receive his orders from me. Tell me what you want and I will do the best I can for you."

He thereupon commanded the police to go to the cellar and bring up the barrel of Epsom salts. Saying, "That is my cellar," I blocked the way, and, closing the trapdoor, stood upon it. Next, he directed the police captain to remove me. The latter attempted it, failed, then told his eight men to do it. As two of them started forward, Mr. Yarrow, who had come in meanwhile, stepped up beside me. He had been, in college days, center rush on the Wesleyan football team, and weighed forty pounds more than I did. He caught the first fellow by the shoulders and swung him around till he was dizzy. When he let go the man slunk away to a corner, and we overheard him mutter to his captain, "If we had had permission to use our pistols we could have beaten them, but they were too strong with their hands for us."

"Go and call twenty gendarmes," the captain commanded him.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

"Bring a hundred if you wish," called Mr. Yarrow after him.

"But you could not withstand a hundred!"

"We can—for one minute."

Perhaps for the first time they now realized that we were making this stand for principle. We knew that if they could violate one thing in our American dispensary they could violate everything in our American premises; that where fifteen thousand Armenians had found refuge in Abdul Hamid's time there would no longer be safety even for an American. If they could violate our American premises in Van, Turkish officials would use it as a precedent and violate all other American premises in Turkey. So we felt that it was up to us to risk our lives if need be to defend the inviolability of American premises in the Ottoman Empire.

Miss Knapp had meanwhile sent for the Russian Vice-Consul, who was in charge of American and English interests in Van, the English Consul having gone to England to join his regiment. At this critical moment he walked, a man of gigantic stature, with his armed kavass at his heels.

Looking down on the scene he inquired: "Why

## IN TURKEY

do you let these men in here? They have no right here."

"They came in without invitation and refuse to leave."

With a look of surprise and a sharp wave of his hand the consul snapped out, "Haidi, git!" — and four of the police went out as if they had been shot out. He then announced that he was going to the Vali to complain; whereupon the captain whispered to the police officer, "Hurry to the station and telephone, and get your story in first."<sup>1</sup>

M. Akimovitch went to the Vali, and demanded that the men be immediately recalled and that the Vali apologize officially for the insult to the American premises and persons. The next day he came with his carriage and took me to the Vali to receive the official apology. He cited incidents which had occurred in connection with Russian subjects in Constantinople during the Balkan War as precedents establishing beyond question the absolute correctness of our position. The Vali apologized and ordered his police "on no account to interfere

<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the war the police stations were connected with the Government offices by telephone for the first time.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

with our premises without his special orders." That command saved thousands of lives and practically saved the city of Van from massacre, as will be shown later.<sup>1</sup>

Turkey remained nominally neutral until the end of October. In September, however, Jevdet Bey, Lieutenant-Governor of Van, took bands of volunteers across the border to stir up the Persians against Russia and, by destroying and plundering many Christian villages, to arouse their lust for blood so that they might be incited to join in a holy war.

On the very day Turkey declared war with Russia, before M. Akimovitch and the French Consul received official notice from their Governments of this declaration, they were made prisoners in their own consulates, and later sent under guard out of the country; the wife of the French Consul and her parents, who were Austrians, remained behind and suffered no injury or inconvenience from the Turks throughout the months that followed.

<sup>1</sup> We were fortunate in having M. Akimovitch to represent us at this crisis. Few American Consuls in Turkey dared to act boldly on their own initiative; could not count on the support of their Government or on its prestige.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE RED CROSS IN VAN

TURKEY was not ready for war. She could neither provision, equip, nor adequately house her new army. When I visited some recruits in their quarters in Van I could hardly find room to step between the men as they lay on the floor. They were covered with vermin, for facilities for keeping clean were very insufficient. Cases of typhus and dysentery began to appear and were not isolated, except the very worst, which were sent to the military hospital. The conditions there were absolutely indescribable. Even the remembrance of the filth I witnessed seems to stifle me as I write. The windows were kept closed because of the cold and patients and orderlies smoked almost constantly to counteract the stench. The army doctors refused to enter the wards. They would stand at the doors and inquire of the orderlies how many men had died and what were the diseases of the others. Those who entered this hospital never left it alive, so the soldiers declared.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

A new hospital had been in course of construction for some months; it was now rapidly finished by means of unpaid conscript labor; first-class equipment for it had been imported from Russia, and after it was opened the old hospital was used as a receiving ward.

Then began the war with Russia and soon the wounded were coming in. Not in ambulances; there were none. They were tied on oxen or piled two layers deep on ox-carts; those supposed to be mortally wounded were left on the field, where some of them lived four or five days unattended. The two hundred and fifty beds of the new hospital were soon filled and then patients were laid on the floor under the bedsteads.

There were two capable surgeons in charge, but one of them was often away at the front; the other, an Arab, was very faithful, but of course unequal to his overwhelming task. All other physicians in Van, Turkish or Armenian, had been sent into the army early in the autumn, among them Dr. Vartanian who had come with me from Harput to be my assistant. He died not long after of typhus.

Druggists not only prepared but administered  
[ 228 ]

## IN TURKEY

(and often prescribed) the medicines, making the rounds of the hospital for this latter purpose usually not more than once a day. My assistant druggist, who had been taken over during my absence in Harput, was one of these.

There were no trained nurses—only ignorant orderlies—to care for the patients, who were rarely given baths, change of linen, or sufficient food.

Learning of the condition of these poor men, Schwester Martha Kleiss and our Miss McLaren offered their services as superintendents and nurses, and their offer was gladly accepted. They found rooms full of sheets and shirts which had been requisitioned from the Armenians, but not put to use. They brought order out of chaos and accomplished wonders in the way of making their patients more comfortable, though the very inadequate surgical and medical care these poor men received often made their new nurses heartsick and indignant.

Before they had fairly entered on this work I had offered to take ten of the worst cases into my own hospital, and one day at sunset came a corporal bringing thirty-three men, some in carriages, some on litters, some walking supported

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

by friends. Miss Bond and her nurses and orderlies had their hands full stowing away thirty-three where there had been room for only ten, but they managed it, and on my evening rounds I found a happy lot of Turks, for they had had their first bath, their first clean shirts, their first decent meal since "before the war," and were lying in more comfortable beds than most of them had seen in their whole lives. Thereafter we always had a large number of soldiers, many coming directly to us, because they had heard of the difference between the Turkish and the American hospital.

Our hospital did not lack enemies, however. The army physician who had tried to requisition our drugs in September, walked into our hospital one Sunday morning, after coming back from the front in March, and, ignoring me, went from bed to bed recording the names of patients and their diseases and giving the nurses instructions as to treatments. I told the nurses to be most courteous to him, and to facilitate his getting any information he desired concerning the military patients.

He entered the private room of a Turkish officer on whose knee was an antiseptic poultice.

## IN TURKEY

"It is forbidden to use poultices in Turkey. Never permit Dr. Ussher to put one on you again," he cried, snatching it off.

I reminded him that this was an American hospital, that he was my guest, and that professional etiquette required that suggestions concerning the treatment of a patient should be made to me and not to the patient. Thereupon he lost his temper and declared that Americans and all foreigners were to be under Government control.

We parted with outward-seeming friendliness after all. But that afternoon he sent me through the Vali a command to present my firman from the Sultan within twenty-four hours; if I did not, our hospital would be considered unauthorized and closed or taken over by the Government. I replied to the Vali that as the firman for our institution was issued to our Ambassador in Constantinople and was in his hands, all communications regarding the status of our hospital must come through the Embassy. I also telegraphed to our Ambassador and received the following reply: "American institutions among which hospital at Van officially recognized by imperial irade and should not be interfered by local authorities. Embassy trusts that local authorities

## **AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN,**

will appreciate the services rendered by your hospital as they are appreciated by the central authorities."

I had early offered to train Red Cross or Red Crescent workers. We organized a class of thirty intelligent young Armenians, some of whom were employed as nurses and given an intensive training.

Mr. Peet, our mission treasurer at Constantinople, forwarded us one hundred liras to help carry on the war service of our hospital, and half as much for general relief. I might say here that for a time we found money very difficult to obtain. There was a branch of the Ottoman Bank in the city, but the Government had cleaned it out early in the war and it could cash no checks. Nor did any one dare to deposit money there. Before long Armenians began to bring their hoarded cash to us to keep for them in our safe. One week we were much surprised by a sudden "run on the bank." The cause of this was a rumor that the United States had entered the war, and people believed that American missionaries would be sent out of the country at once.

After correspondence with Mr. Peet, Ambassador Morgenthau, and Consul-General Raven-

## IN TURKEY

dal it was decided to make our hospital a Red Cross hospital under the American National Red Cross. We invited the Vali and several high officials to a reception in Mr. Yarrow's house, then took them to the hospital enclosure, where we had arranged for appropriate exercises. The nurses donned Red Cross badges; the Vali made an address most appreciative of the service rendered the Ottoman Empire by American hospitals and schools, and then the Red Cross flag was raised on the same mast with the Stars and Stripes. Thenceforward these two flags floated high above every building, above every other flag, in the city. In the whole province they were the sole symbols of safety and service.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP SEA

MUCH of the comparative freedom from disturbance we enjoyed in Van during the fall and winter of 1914 and 1915 was due to the fact that we had a strong and liberal-minded Vali. In February he was transferred to Erzerum and Jevdet Bey, brother-in-law of Enver Pasha, Minister of War, succeeded him, but left the city in charge of a Vekil while he reorganized the Turkish army on the Persian border.

Just before the Armenian Easter he returned to Van. A great number of prominent Armenians of the city went out several miles to greet him with almost royal honors. Descending from his carriage he embraced Vremyan who had been a classmate of his at a Turkish college. Although he was not aware of it, he had just been saved from assassination at the hand of a justly outraged youth by the intervention of these Tashnagist leaders. They had already proved



JEVDET BEY, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF VAN



## IN TURKEY

their loyalty to the Government in many ways. Here are two instances.

When the Kurds were in a panic after the annihilation of their forces on the Persian border, had renounced allegiance to the Ottoman Government and joined the Russians, the Armenians could easily have seized the provinces of Van and Bitlis and have plundered the terror-stricken Turks, who now feared that they would avenge themselves for many robberies and injuries. Instead of this they gave the Turks asylum and promised them protection when the Russians should arrive. After the villages of Gargakan, Gargar, and Pelu had been burned by a Turkish mob imported by the Government from Bitlis for the purpose, the Armenians in Kavash defended themselves so successfully that Turks traveling through that district adopted Armenian names as a protection. Vremyan went from Van to persuade the bands who were in control of all the roads through the province to desist and accept the promise of the Government to restore the plunder taken from the villages, a promise which was never kept.

Soon after his arrival in Van, Jevdet Bey demanded four thousand soldiers from the Armenians.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

ians, although all of their race in the army had been disarmed. They offered to give a tenth of the number as hostages and to pay the exemption fee of the rest; but in spite of the fact that a special order had been sent from Constantinople a few months earlier permitting all Armenians to pay the exemption fee, he insisted on having the men instead of the money.

As we learned later, he had already sent out orders to sub-governors to begin a massacre in their districts on April 19, after having first made away with the intellectuals and all leaders of the people.

The head of the Armenian school in Shadakh, fifty miles south of Van, was arrested in deliberate violation of the pledge that schools and teachers should not be interfered with. The people learned that he was to be murdered that night and surrounded the Government building, informing the Kaimakam that neither he nor his gendarmes would be permitted to leave the house till the teacher was liberated.

Jevdet Bey thought this a good opportunity to get rid of some of the chief men of Van. He invited four prominent Armenians, among them Ishkhan (the only one of the leaders supposed to

## IN TURKEY

have a knowledge of military tactics), to go to Shadakh as a "peace commission" with an equal number of prominent Turks, and compromise the matter which had arisen between the Armenians and the Government.

He sent them off with a guard of honor, had a feast prepared for them in the first village at which they stopped, and at that feast had the four Armenians treacherously murdered.

The following morning, Saturday, April 17, Jevdet summoned four leaders of the Tashnagists, Vremyan, M.P., Terzibashian, Jidatchian, and Aram. The last-named for various reasons was not able to present himself. Wild rumors of massacre taking place somewhere, and of the murder of Ishkhan and his companions, were disturbing the Armenians, and I went to the Vali to see if there was any way of quieting the apprehensions of the people. While I was in his office the colonel of the Vali's Regiment, which he called his Kasab Tabouri, or Butcher Regiment, composed of Turkish convicts, entered and said, "You sent for me."

"Yes," replied Jevdet; "go to Shadakh and wipe out its people." And turning to me he said savagely, "I won't leave one, not one so

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

high," holding his hand below the height of his knee.

The regiment started ostensibly for Shadakh. Before Ishkhan and his companions had been murdered, they had been told that all the villages between Kertz and Shadakh had already been destroyed; but they had again warned the Armenians to submit to the burning of two or three villages and the murder of half a dozen or a dozen men without retaliation, rather than give the Government an excuse for reprisals. The orders to go to Shadakh may have been a blind; for the regiment turned aside down the Armenian Valley (Haiots Tsore) and destroyed six villages in which there were none but old men, women, and children. Many of the criminals had been bandits and outlaws living by their rifles for years and were crack shots. They were mounted, armed with daggers, automatic pistols, and modern repeating rifles. Where they saw a mother nursing her babe they shot through the babe and the mother's breast and arm. They would gallop into a crowd of fleeing women and children, draw their daggers, and rip up the unfortunate creatures. I forbear to describe the wounds brought to me to repair.

## IN TURKEY

In the meantime Terzibashian and Jidatchian had been released to "persuade all the Armenian men to give themselves up unconditionally to the military." Vremyan was retained to be sent to Constantinople, but was murdered on the way.

The Armenians in Van, who had practically decided to give the Vali the four thousand men he had demanded, now dared not do so, for they felt certain he intended to put the four thousand to death. They dared not refuse, either, lest the refusal precipitate a massacre of the entire population. They asked Mr. Yarrow and myself that Saturday afternoon to intercede with Jevdet Bey on their behalf. On the way down we were met by the commander of the gendarmerie with a summons from the Vali. Jevdet Bey's first demand was permission to put fifty soldiers with cannon and supplies for ten days in our mission compound, which was on a hill dominating the Armenian quarter of the Garden City and also the road from the great Turkish barracks on Varak plain.

We inquired, "Why do you wish to put soldiers in our premises?"

"To protect you."

"Against whom?"

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN]

"These despicable Armenians."

"But we are in no danger from the Armenians. They have no intention nor desire to make trouble. They would not even enter our premises if we forbade them."

"Well, there may be trouble between the Kurds and the Armenians, and the Kurds, not knowing you, might injure you or your premises, and you know the Ottoman Government must protect you."

"Certainly, the Ottoman Government must protect us, but we have no fear of Turks or Kurds; they are all our friends. They have received hundreds of kindnesses from us. We can travel anywhere about the province without the usual Government guard, and are always welcome in the homes of the chiefs."

"But the fact is, and I did not want to say it, the Kurds have deserted by the thousands from the Erzerum army and are coming across the country, pillaging and burning, and I am afraid that with my garrison [of six thousand], I cannot protect the city."

It seemed strange that he should then expect to protect us with fifty soldiers, but we did not argue that point. He assured us of his peaceful

## IN TURKEY

intentions and took his oath that if any Turk should molest an Armenian he should be put to death, but on the other hand if any Armenian should fire a single shot, "I will wipe out the city and not leave one knee-high. Not one!"

The Vali was insistent on immediate permission to place the guard and we as insistent that we must first consult our associates. Then he requested that Miss McLaren continue her work at the Turkish hospital and promised that she should be perfectly safe and all her needs supplied. He wished her to know that she might not be able to communicate with us for ten days. From the Vali we went to the military hospital and presented his request, telling her that we feared it foreboded serious trouble. She decided that she would stay by her soldier boys and do what she could to protect her Armenian orderlies.

The Tashnagist leaders, when they heard of the proffered guard, told us they would not permit so large a Turkish force to reach our premises and thus to occupy a strategic and dominating position in the Armenian quarter.

At noon the next day (Sunday) I went to the Vali with the Italian Consular Agent, Signor

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Sbordoni, and together we tried to persuade him that, because of the reports of massacre in the villages and the perfidious treatment of Ishkhan and his companions, the Armenians were in such fear and excitement that it would not be safe to send so large a body of Turkish soldiers into the heart of the Armenian quarter; it might precipitate trouble. We told him also that we feared if there were trouble between the Armenians and Moslems outside our premises, and Turkish soldiers within our walls saw Armenians firing on their comrades outside, they might be tempted to shoot at them and so draw fire on the compound and endanger the lives of those who were there. We urged him if he insisted on sending soldiers as a guard to make the number but five or ten, just enough to show that we were under Ottoman protection, and we would take the rest of the responsibility. He became irritated and insisted: "You will take fifty soldiers or none! And if you refuse to take the fifty soldiers you must sign a statement that you refuse the protection of the Ottoman Government." Some time before he had said that Americans would be treated by the Government precisely as its Armenian subjects were treated. With this state-

## IN TURKEY

ment in his hands he could destroy us as he destroyed Armenians, and if our Government should happen to make any inquiry he would show the paper, affirm that he tried to protect us, that we refused his protection, and the Kurds did the rest.<sup>1</sup>

"Very well, Your Excellency, if you insist on sending the soldiers, knowing that it may cause the trouble which you say you desire to avoid, your officer must understand that our premises are a part of America, extraterritorial by treaty right, and neutral. We will preserve their neutrality to the last. Your officer must have his instructions in writing, a copy of these must be given to us that we may see he does not exceed his orders; and I assure you that if any one, Moslem or Christian, fires a shot from our enclosure without our permission, I will shoot him myself."

Again that night and the following day Signor Sbordoni had audience with the Vali and en-

<sup>1</sup> The fact is that there is probably no people in the world easier to govern than most of the Kurds. They will do what they are told by those in authority. I have been through six massacres personally and have heard of many others, and I have yet to hear of a massacre that was not perpetrated or sanctioned by the Ottoman Government. The Kurds will not begin a massacre until they are directed to by the Government.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

deavored to persuade him that the course he was taking was calculated to arouse opposition and not to allay it. Monday the Vali's attitude seemed changed. He was more quiet and urged the Armenians to return to their deserted shops in the market-place, assuring them that there would be no further molestation of Christians. Little did they know that throughout the province at that very hour thousands of defenseless men, women, and children were being slaughtered with the utmost brutality. Turkish soldiers had been quartered in every Armenian village with instructions to begin at a certain hour. The general order read: "The Armenians must be exterminated. If any Moslem protect a Christian, first, his house shall be burned, then the Christian killed before his eyes, and then his [the Moslem's] family and himself."

That afternoon I again visited the military hospital, which was more than half a mile south of the Armenian quarter. As I entered the operating-room seeking Miss McLaren, I found the Vali there, and two army surgeons removing a bullet from the leg of one of the Vali's Laz Guard. Jevdet was surprised to see me. As I left the operating-room he followed me and

## IN TURKEY

said, "What shall I do? Shall I send the soldiers?" I replied, "You know, but I fear it will precipitate trouble."

I had been asked some weeks before if I would accept appointment as American Consul; Jevdet Bey had been asked if I would be *persona grata* and had expressed himself very cordially in the affirmative. I had replied that I would accept such appointment only in an emergency. As a means of letting our Ambassador at Constantinople and the American Consul at Harput know that the emergency had now arrived, I telegraphed them after leaving the hospital, "Conditions critical. Consular presence urgent," and triple-paid the telegram so that it might have precedence over all other telegraphic business, but the next day the Armenian censor told me that the Vali had not permitted the sending of these messages.

On my return from the telegraph station I was informed that of the score of Turkish soldiers in our hospital there were half a dozen who had sufficiently recovered to be discharged, and they desired to depart. I gave them papers recommending them for furlough and sent them out.

A little later I found that they were being de-

## **AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN**

tained in the Armenian quarter lest in their passage through it they should see the bands of armed young men who were holding themselves in readiness for defense in case of a Turkish attack. I said I was responsible for their safety and no harm must come to them. Thereupon they were feasted at a café and escorted to the Turkish quarter.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A HEROIC DEFENSE

BEFORE sunrise Tuesday, April 20, we heard several rifle shots on Varak plain. They were followed by a fusillade. During the night Turkish soldiers had occupied a line of trenches about the Armenian quarter of Aikesdan (the Garden City). Two of them had seized a beautiful young woman, one of our former orphan girls fleeing with her children to the city from Shushantz. Two Armenian men running up to rescue the woman were fired at by the Turkish soldiers and killed. All this took place before the German Orphanage premises and was witnessed by Herr and Frau Spörri. Those few shots had been the signal for a general fusillade by the Turks on all sides, and almost immediately Jevdet Bey opened artillery fire on the Armenian quarter in Aikesdan and also on the Armenian quarter in the walled city.

Massacre had so often threatened Van that the Huntchagist,<sup>1</sup> Armenist, and Tashnagist

<sup>1</sup> The Huntchagist leaders were all in prison, however, at this time.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

leaders had before the Turkish Revolution prepared for such an event. They had trained young men as marksmen and smuggled in a quantity of arms and ammunition. Most of the ammunition had been found and seized by the Government a short time before the Revolution. After the Constitutional Government had been established with "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" as its motto, the Armenians had transformed their revolutionary societies into political parties and had ceased to drill their young men. The mobilization of 1914 had greatly reduced their numbers. The greater part of the ammunition which had escaped seizure in 1908 had been secreted in the near-by villages with the expectation that in the event of a massacre the peasantry would come to the defense of the city.

But in this spring of 1915 very few men had been left in the villages. Thus it came about that in this crisis there were only about three hundred men armed with rifles, and a thousand armed with pistols and antique weapons, to defend thirty thousand Armenians, an area of over a square mile in Aikesdan, and an area of less than a square mile in the walled city. Their leaders had, however, laid their plans carefully during



VAN CASTLE ROCK



## IN TURKEY

the week past and now bands of young men at the street corners on the boundaries of the Armenian quarter were ready for the oncoming Turkish mob and a charge of infantry. Their return fire was so utterly unexpected that the infantry sought cover.

The firing kept up all day. We could hear the booming of the cannon on Castle Rock; the Armenians of the walled city and of Aikesdan, each group now in a state of siege, were of course cut off from communication with each other. In the evening we saw more than half a score of houses in flames here and there beyond the limits of what I shall hereafter call the besieged city. The Turks burned that night and later the houses of all the Armenians who had lived outside the strictly Armenian quarter, but who had taken refuge within the lines of defense when trouble seemed imminent. They made one exception and that exception showed that even Jevdet Bey had a soft spot somewhere in his heart; he spared the house in which he had spent his boyhood and spared its owner-occupant, Jidatchian, and his family.

At first the opposing forces were on opposite sides of the main streets, each watching eagle-

## 'AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

eyed through tiny loopholes for a glimpse of the other. The Armenians joined house to house, built walls at night, and dug trenches across the roads. They built walls within walls to withstand the Turkish artillery and soon found just how thick these must be in order to stop the Turkish shells. The Turks would fire a volley with rifles and the Armenians would reply with pistols, but with surprising accuracy. Small boys would watch their chance, dash to the door of a Turkish position with a bundle of rags saturated with kerosene, ignite it, fan it with fez or cap till the door was blazing and the smoke driving the Turks out, and then run back. One boy on his return was hit, the bullet paralyzing his leg; a brave girl went out under fire and brought him in on her back. She was given a medal by the Military Council.

This Military Council sent a manifesto to the Turkish people saying that the Armenians were fighting one man, Jevdet, and not those who had been their neighbors in the past and would be in the future. Valis might come and go, but the two races must continue to live together, and they hoped that after Jevdet went there might be peaceful and friendly relations with them.

## IN TURKEY

The Council issued orders to their soldiers not to drink, not to curse the religion of the Turks, to spare women and children, and to report truthfully the actions in which they were engaged. A small bulletin containing the military news was printed and distributed daily.

Representatives of the Tashnagist and Armenianist parties and men belonging to neither of these societies composed this committee which was one of many formed very early in the siege under the leadership of Mr. Yarrow. The Armenians in Van province had had small experience in organization, and had perhaps not much natural ability along that line. It was absolutely necessary that some one who had that ability should see to it that the besieged city should be properly governed. Mr. Yarrow organized a government with a mayor, judges, police, and board of health. Thousands had been obliged to leave their own homes; six thousand of these had fled to the American mission compound; the hejira had begun the Saturday evening before the siege, and all day Sunday and Monday there had been a steady stream of people, cattle, and household stuff entering our gates. A housing committee assigned these to the school-buildings, lace-house,

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

chapel, our own residences, and small hastily constructed shacks on the grounds. Our houses were filled from attic to wood-sheds, my house sheltering a hundred.

A supply committee bought and requisitioned provisions, commandeered the flour-mills and bakehouses, started a soup-kitchen and issued bread-tickets and soup-tickets. Miss Rogers and Miss Silliman secured a daily supply of milk, and set their school-girls the task of sterilizing and distributing it to the babies who needed food.

A foreign relations committee saw to it that the neutrality of American territory was not compromised. It forbade Armenian soldiers entering our gates unless they were willing to leave their arms outside. It even forbade the bringing of wounded soldiers to our hospital; they were taken instead to schoolhouses and dwelling-houses transformed into temporary hospitals, and I attended them there.

Every one was set to work at what he or she could do best and every one worked cheerfully and willingly, not even the most prominent men refusing tasks, however disagreeable, that were for the common good. A cheery, hopeful spirit prevailed. There was no mourning for the dead

## IN TURKEY

—none of the usual Oriental wailing. From the moment these people had known it was to be a struggle to the death they had raised their heads and said, "Better ten days' liberty and then death than to die the slaves we 've been."

The supply of ammunition was small. Jewelers, tinsmiths, coppersmiths and blacksmiths set to work to increase it, turning out with the primitive tools at their command two thousand cartridges and case bullets a day. An Armenian professor, graduate of an American university, made smokeless powder. Unskilled labor built walls and dug trenches, often under fire. Women made uniforms and other garments for the soldiers and cooked for them. The normal school band marched about the city playing military airs where the fighting was hottest. Even young boys did their bit, and a big bit it was, too.

The previous fall my thirteen-year-old Neville, while reading "The Outlook," "St. Nicholas," and "Youth's Companion" had been inspired with the desire to become a Boy Scout. He translated the Scout Law into Armenian and induced ten boys of his own age to join him; they explained the Law to a teacher in the boys' school

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

and persuaded him to become their Scout-Master, then secured a book on First Aid and studied it together.

These Boy Scouts now became the sanitary police and fire patrol of our little municipality. They kept the various buildings supplied with water for drinking purposes, and for use in case of fire, acted as messengers, reported the sick to me, and brought patients on litters to our hospital. They dug Turkish bullets out of the ground by the hundred and took them to the munition workers to melt and recast.

The Turks tunneled underground from the police barracks at Arark with the intention of coming up in the garden back of the Armenian lines at night and massacring the unarmed people. The Armenians were tunneling, too. The Armenian tunnel was right under the Turkish tunnel and once a Turk dropped through. Within five minutes the Armenians were in the police barracks and squirting kerosene around with syringes and squirt-guns, set fire to it. They thus excavated under and destroyed Hamoud Agha Kushla, the great barracks just north of us and the British Consulate, which had been made an important Turkish stronghold. Their



ARMENIANS DEFENDING THE TRENCHES BELOW THE MISSION COMPOUND



ARMENIANS MAKING CARTRIDGES BY HAND DURING DEFENSE



## IN TURKEY

own strongholds or "positions" numbered eighty.

Every effort was made by the Armenians to draw the Turkish fire without wasting their own ammunition. Some of their ruses furnished diversion and enlivened the gloom. Anything that would induce the people to laugh or rejoice was of exceeding value.

The main street ran direct from the Armenian lines to the walled city. One dark night the Armenians took a small dog and tied a lantern to its neck with a Christmas candle in it. Firing a pistol they started the dog running down the main street. The Turks, seeing a lantern moving away from the Armenian lines, thought a messenger was going to the walled city and cried, "Stop him! Stop him!" They fired volley after volley at the height of a man, but the dog ran on. Turks in the other positions about the city, hearing the rapid firing, surmised that either the Russians had come in or the Armenians had attacked in force and endeavored to draw off their fire. They too blazed away in the darkness, and before they learned that the cause of all this was only a dog, they had wasted many thousand rounds of ammunition.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Another night the Armenians tied a number of empty kerosene cans on the pack-saddle of a horse they had captured from a Turk. Again they started it down the main street, and it made noise enough for a hundred thousand men. The Turks fired at the noise and it is needless to say did not hit it.

From the cannon on Castle Rock, which, as I have said, rose sheer three hundred feet above the walled city, forming its northern boundary, the Turks fired down on the Armenian quarter there, demolishing the upper stories of the houses. They threw down hand grenades, Greek fire, and three hundred and twenty pound bombs.

The first ones did considerable damage. Our evangelist, Vartan, had organized the defense, which was composed of sixty riflemen, and was indefatigable and fearless in moving about the city under fire and encouraging his men. He parceled off the city into little squares, appointing two women to each square. These watched day and night. The moment they heard the boom of the mortar on the Rock all were on the *qui-vive* to see where the dreaded bomb would strike; when it struck a brave woman would run to it with a pitcher, pour water on the burn-

## | IN TURKEY

ing fuse, and snatch it out, and from these bombs the soldiers obtained the powder to reload their cartridges and keep up the fight. At the end of the second week of the siege they managed to send a messenger to their comrades in Aikesdan, to encourage the latter by informing them of their own success and by assuring them of their determination to hold out to the end.

The Armenians in Aikesdan elaborated and increased the number of their trenches. One day one of their first-line trenches, manned by forty-four soldiers, was taken by five hundred Kurds from Bitlis. These Kurds had been promised large rewards by Jevdet, and had been assured by their sheikhs that they were invulnerable.

In a trench about forty yards from the front was a young man named Aram Borozanjian. A year before the war he had come to me as a patient under the domination of a habit from which only the transforming power of God could release him. I had talked and prayed with him, and, with a simple and beautiful prayer, he had given himself to the Lord. He had joined the Red Cross training class the first winter of the war, had offered to help in our hospital without

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

remuneration, and when the siege began had volunteered to care for the wounded in the first-line trenches.

Now, as he saw the defenders about to flee and the white-turbaned hordes sweeping onward, he dropped a bandage, snatched up a pistol, and, shouting to the Armenians to stand their ground, leaped upon the rampart and, fully exposed, dropped six of the Kurds. His comrades rallied and soon the Kurds, cowed by this exhibition of courage in the face of such odds, and panic-stricken by the discovery of their vulnerability, turned and fled, leaving thirty-three dead on the ground.

Just then the Turkish artillery opened fire and shrapnel struck Aram on the left hip, shattering his left side. Bits of antimony and tin were driven through his body and limbs and made frightfully painful, irritating wounds. Strange to say, he did not lose consciousness from the shock. He directed his companions how to stanch the blood; they put him on a stretcher and hurried with him to our American hospital. I had received word that he was coming, and met him at the operating-room door. He endeavored to reach for my hand, and smiling in

## **IN TURKEY**

my face he said: "O Doctor, I am so glad I learned to know Jesus and am ready to go. But please, Doctor, let me die quickly." I tried to keep him alive till his mother could be brought, but he was bleeding internally. Directing his companions to sell his pistol and give the proceeds to support his mother and sister for a little while, he passed away. He had saved the city —in this crisis. What hope was there for its future!

## CHAPTER XIX

### FUN FOR JEVDET BEY

I HAD known Jevdet Bey when he was a youth, had been his father's family physician, and we had always been on the most friendly terms. Our ladies had been charmed by the beauty, grace, and refinement of his wife, with whom they had exchanged calls shortly before the beginning of the war. She was a sister of Enver Pasha, Minister of War, was a New Woman as it befitted the sister and wife of Young Turks to be, and had found most irksome the restrictions of a Turkish woman's life in "the provinces." Jevdet Bey had proved himself past-master of the art of concealment and dissimulation. He had deceived even the Armenians as to his intentions; had pretended to take counsel with their leaders and to need their help up to the very hour of the murder of Ish-khan. Pleasant social relations between himself and the American missionaries had, up to the very last, been fostered both by ourselves for the

## IN TURKEY

sake of what influence we might have, and by him for his own purposes; we had even extended and he had accepted an invitation to tea at my house Friday afternoon, April 16. At the last moment he had sent word that he was too busy to come—we understood why the next day.

Now he threw off all disguise in his communications to us. It became clear from these and from the course of events that he had planned for April 19 a massacre of all the Armenians in the vilayet, and that our insistence on time to discuss among ourselves his offer of the guard for our premises had caused him to postpone the massacre in the city for twenty-four hours. It is quite probable that he thought this twenty-four hours' delay had been responsible for the effective defense. At all events, it was evident that the successful and prolonged resistance of the Armenians had been a tremendous surprise to him. He was enraged against them and enraged against us. He upbraided me with having sent out of my hospital the discharged Turkish patients I have mentioned on the eve of "Ikhtishosh."<sup>1</sup> "Benevolent institutions should make no distinctions between races and religions"! He

<sup>1</sup> Mix-up, riot, event — the word used for massacre or disturbance.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

went on to say that armed men had been seen entering and leaving our premises; that he was about to attack the Armenian trenches in the plain below us; and if a single shot were fired from these trenches he would be regretfully compelled to turn all his artillery on our buildings and destroy them utterly.

These trenches on Varak plain, a quarter of a mile from our compound and southeast of it, were commanded by a very large Turkish barracks which was directly south of us. This barracks, the Hadji Bekir Cushla, commanded our buildings also, which were on a slight rise of ground so that nothing intervened between us and the Turkish guns. Our compound was also overlooked by a guardhouse on the summit of Toprak Kala Hill directly north of us. So central was our position with regard to the opposing forces that Turkish bullets flew constantly across our premises, peppering our walls and falling like hailstones on our roofs. Several of our refugees had already been wounded within our gates. I had written requesting Jevdet Bey to warn the soldiers in the Hadji Bekir Barracks to be careful of the direction of their fire, for there had been no firing from the direction of our premises.

## IN TURKEY

The letter just quoted from was his answer (April 23) to this request. It had been preceded by two shells, one striking the wall of a porch in my house, but failing to explode, the other exploding harmlessly against a wall just north of my house. We wondered if these were meant to be an earnest of the threatened bombardment.

We replied that we had preserved the neutrality of our premises and no man with even a cartridge-belt on him had been permitted to enter our compound; that by no law could we be held responsible for what was done outside our property and beyond our control; and that his Government would be answerable to the American Government for any injury to our buildings.

Our first postman was another discharged Turkish patient. Our second an old woman who on her second trip was shot by Turkish soldiers because she failed to raise her white flag first in climbing out of a ditch into which she had fallen. Another old woman was the third messenger. Herr Spörri wrote describing what he had witnessed the morning of April 20 and asserting that Turkish soldiers had fired the first shot of that fateful day. Signor Sbordoni wrote Jevdet

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Bey that he could not expect the Armenians to surrender, as his attack had been an attempt to massacre them. We wrote asking information concerning Miss McLaren and Schwester Martha. To this Jevdet Bey vouchsafed no reply, though he wrote Herr Spörri later that Schwester Martha was well.

After a while the Armenian leaders said they would permit no more messages to pass through their lines, but not before a letter of Jevdet's to M. Aligardi, the Austrian banker, now staying with the Spörris, had given evidence of his personal animosity. He wrote that one of his officers had taken some Russian prisoners and cannon and he would cause them to parade in front of "His Majesty Dr. Ussher's fortifications, so that he, who with his rebels was always awaiting the Russians, should see them and be content." The letter ended with the words, "Ishim yok, kefum chok"—literally, "To me there is no work, but much pleasure" (or fun). The meaning of this phrase was that what he was doing was only fun for him, not work.

What *was* he doing? On Monday, the 19th, while he was assuring the people in Van that there would be no further molestation of Armen-

## IN TURKEY

ians, the sub-governor of Arjish (Agantz), the next largest town of the province, following his orders, summoned the prominent men of the place to the Government building on the pretense of important business. Then his soldiers collected the rest of the Armenian male inhabitants (two thousand five hundred) and after dark they were taken in groups of fifty with their hands tied behind them to the bank of the river and there slain. Three, feigning death, escaped at night from under the bodies of their companions. The women and children and property were divided among the Turks.

That Monday all the villages in the province were attacked by Jevdet Bey's soldiers and by Kurds under his command. Shadakh was unconquerable. Moks was protected by a Kurdish chief. Several villages held out as long as their ammunition lasted, but the rest made no resistance; they had lost most of their men by conscription, had no leaders, and were unable to coöperate. We have absolute proof that fifty-five thousand people were killed. Many thousand fled to the mountains and, hiding in caves, escaped death, having a better chance to do so because after a day or two Jevdet Bey had to

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

withdraw his soldiers from the villages to aid in the siege of Van. Others tried to reach the city.

Sunday morning, April 25, at about four o'clock, there was a loud and prolonged pounding and knocking at the great double-leaved wooden gate of our compound. I went in bathrobe and slippers to the gate and found outside several hundred people from Haiots Tsore who had come by night fifteen miles along the mountain-tops to Shushantz, a village on Varak Mountain three miles from Van, plainly to be seen by us across Varak plain. The Armenians of Van had managed to keep open the road to Shushantz which was defended by bands of young villagers under the leadership of Koo-youmjian, Government superintendent of village schools. By this road, again at night, these refugees had entered the besieged city, bringing with them over a hundred wounded who begged admittance to our hospital. Sixty of these we took in at once, and operated on. Many of them were most horribly mutilated, little babies shattered—! We dressed the wounds of the rest and sent them to houses outside our compound, whence they could walk or be brought by others

## IN TURKEY

twice a week to our operating-room to be attended to.

This was but a beginning. After that there was a constant stream of refugees; stealthy at first; then Jevdet Bey changed his tactics and *sent* women and children in to help starve out the city. He also sent a large number of women and children to a desert island in the lake where they slowly starved.

Some of our patients had been protected and cared for by Kurds. One woman had fallen down the mountain and broken her thigh. A passing Kurd had taken her on his back, carried her up the mountain and laid her under the shelter of a haystack. Her children kept her supplied with snow, which was, with the exception of a few grass roots and flower bulbs, their only food for twenty days.

Another Kurd did the same thing for a wounded woman who had, before her marriage to a villager, been a nurse in our hospital. When she recovered sufficiently to walk she made her way to Shushantz; twice on the way she encountered Turks who stripped her of all her clothing; each time she was later given a garment by Armenian fugitives. On her way from Shushantz

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

she was again stripped, came to the city stark naked, and died that night in our hospital, bequeathing to us her orphan children.

One patient, a young man, had been hidden by a Kurd in his own house for a while disguised in woman's clothing. Such instances could doubtless be multiplied many times. These Kurds were kind at much risk to themselves, since Jevdet Bey had, as I have related, threatened with dire penalties any Moslem who should harbor a Christian.

One mother ran ahead with her two older children, and the father followed with his two-year-old baby boy in his arms and his little six-year-old daughter on his back, each in a short shirt only, just as they were snatched from bed at daybreak. The father was shot down and the mother, not daring to risk her older children by delay, screamed to the little ones, thrown to the ground by their father's fall, to "come on." The little girl, who was small for her age, took her two-year-old brother on her back, carried him seven miles up the mountain, through the snow, barefoot, lay out on the plain with him in the biting cold all night, and followed the other refugees into the city before dawn. Mrs. Ussher

## IN TURKEY

found them huddled against the wall at our garden gate, shivering and crying softly. They had been a day and a half without food. She brought them in, fed, bathed and clothed them, and later their mother was found. We heard her shrieking early one morning at our gate, "Oh, will God ever forgive me? Will God ever forgive me for leaving my children behind?"

When the refugees in our premises heard of the condition of those worse off than themselves, they took up a collection of twenty-six hundred dollars in less than two hours and formed committees to adopt and care for the orphan children who were streaming in.

They brought bedding to our hospital for the new patients. This was put on the floor in every available bit of space, so that my fifty-bed hospital was made to accommodate one hundred and sixty-seven. I remember that three hundred at one time were coming regularly to have their wounds dressed; how many came thus during the entire siege I cannot remember; their number far exceeded three hundred.

Several of my Red Cross class of the previous fall were nursing in the temporary hospitals to which the Armenian soldiers were removed; the

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

rest worked in our own. The single ladies of our American circle also helped here and in an improvised infirmary containing thirty children.

The village refugees, who before long numbered fifteen thousand, greatly added to the difficulties of the whole situation. Some had brought provision with them or had relatives who took them in and cared for them. To twelve thousand the supply committee issued a daily ration—a very small ration it had to be. Many had had no food during their wanderings and died of starvation soon after entering the city. The exposure and hardships all had undergone, the overcrowding in the besieged city, the insufficient food, made them easy victims of disease. Pneumonia, dysentery, typhoid, and smallpox were very prevalent; and for all these sick and for the wounded there was but one physician—myself. Working from before sunrise till midnight day after day, I could not attend all who needed me.

Mrs. Ussher felt that some of these sick people must have better care than they could get in their crowded quarters, and our hospital was overfull. For her sake the refugees in a schoolhouse

## IN TURKEY

outside our grounds were removed to various other places, and sick women taken in. Here she and Miss Rogers, with very little in the way of equipment, bedding, food, and, after a week, for a reason that will appear later, little help, bathed, fed, and tended the poor, neglected creatures.

The Boy Scouts extended their activities. They collected all the large bottles they could find and sterilized them, filled them with milk which Mrs. Ussher sterilized, and with their pockets full of boiled eggs went about the town, doling out the milk to the starved babies and the eggs to starving women; often feeding the babies themselves to give the mothers a chance to satisfy their own hunger.

One day, while two of them were at their regular task of hunting for Turkish bullets, Neville, jumping into a large hole, stepped on "something soft which made a noise and scared" him. He groped for it and found it was a little child. A mother had come there with her two children and put them into the hole to keep them out of the cold wind; then she lay down close by and died. Bearers carried her away, but did not see the children. They were of course too weak

## **AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN**

to crawl out or to call for help and were nearly dead. The boys had their staffs with them; they took off their coats, made a litter, and carried the babies to the hospital.

## CHAPTER XX

### BOMBARDMENT

THERE was only one hope for the city: the coming of the Russians—the coming of the Russians *in time*. In January they had come in and taken Mulakhasan, Serai, and Bashkhala, towns thirty, thirty-five, and fifty miles from Van. Then they had retreated for no apparent reason, leaving these places to the mercy of the Turks, who had immediately wiped out the Christian population. Whether they were planning to come in again soon, and this time as far as Van, we could not know.

There were many Russian Armenians and Persian Armenians near the borders. The defenders of Van sent messengers out in a desperate attempt to reach these friends. At their suggestion we gave to twelve of these men sent at different times the following message written on tiny strips of the thinnest linen to be sewn into the seams of their garments:—

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

*Van, April 27, 1915.*

To Americans, or any Foreign Consul.

Internal troubles in Van. Government threatens to bombard American premises. Inform American Government American lives in danger.

(Signed)

C. D. USSHER.

E. A. YARROW.

Reward messenger.

Four of the men returned, having found it impossible to get through the Turkish lines. We heard that several had been killed; we did not know whether *all* had been killed or not. If one had succeeded in getting through and his appeal had been responded to, how long would it be before a sufficient force could be made ready to send and could reach us? A delay of a few days only might make their coming of no avail.

On account of the mobilization of the previous fall the supply of grain for the winter and spring had been much less than usual and the Government had made special effort to prevent the Armenians bringing food into the city. On the last day of April, when the first of the messengers was sent, an inventory was taken of the provisions in the besieged city and it was estimated that the supply would last three weeks.

## IN TURKEY

'After that the greater part of the fifteen thousand village refugees had come in.

At the beginning of the fourth week of the siege the outlook seemed almost hopeless. The supply of ammunition was very low. A great number of Armenian soldiers had been killed or too badly wounded to fight, though many fought in spite of their wounds. How could they possibly hold out much longer against Jevdet Bey's greatly superior forces? A few small villages near Van had held out against him until now, or rather he had left them alone after April 19 to devote all his energies to the siege of the city. Now he again attacked these villages, captured and burned them. From our window we could plainly see Shushantz afire on its mountain-side and Varak Monastery, with its priceless store of ancient manuscripts, going up in smoke. The Turkish supply of ammunition seemed exhaustless; they used both poisoned and explosive bullets. Their rifle-firing had been practically incessant day and night, the fusillades being especially severe during the hours of darkness. At any moment the Turks might break through the weakening Armenian lines.

We Americans did not discuss what we should

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

do when this should happen. We had made our decision once for all, when, a day or two after the beginning of the siege, Jevdet Bey had written Signor Sbordoni offering him and us asylum in the Government buildings. We had not for a moment considered accepting this offer and leaving our people. And then, as the Armenians had continued to hold out and he had seen to his amazement that he was to have no easy victory, his rage against us had found expression in the threat of bombardment and in the letter to Aligardi. Of course he thought that we were helping the rebels to withstand him. When the Turks should break through the outer lines we would try to defend the people on our premises awhile longer. We had slowly but inevitably come to the belief that Jevdet Bey would not spare us in that event. He probably believed that there would be little danger of his ever being called to account by our Government.

From the upper stories of our houses we had a fine view of Lake Van. We had at times seen sailing vessels approaching from the west and had surmised that they were bringing ammunition for the Turks from the Bitlis or Akhlat region. Information gained in some way by the Armenians

## IN TURKEY

verified this supposition. Friday evening, May 14, we saw a few ships sailing *away* from Van and Saturday morning a great many more, about forty in all. What could this mean? We knew Jevdet had seized all the Armenian shipping; was he sending to Bitlis for more troops as well as for more ammunition? Or were the Turks sending off their women and children? The Armenian leaders hurried to our houses, studied the small fleet through our field-glasses, and discussed probabilities. They inclined, on the whole, to the belief that the Turkish officers were sending their families away, and hope blazed up once more in the hearts of all only to be extinguished utterly within a few hours.

Suddenly, late that afternoon our ears were startled by that uncanny shriek, rising to a crescendo which once heard can never be forgotten and a shell from Hadji Bekr's Barracks exploded in our hospital yard. Another brought down the Red Cross flag. Five more followed in quick succession, one striking the ground in Mr. Yarrow's garden, another, evidently aimed at the American flag flying above the girls' school building, made a great hole in the roof near the base of the flagstaff. Then—silence!

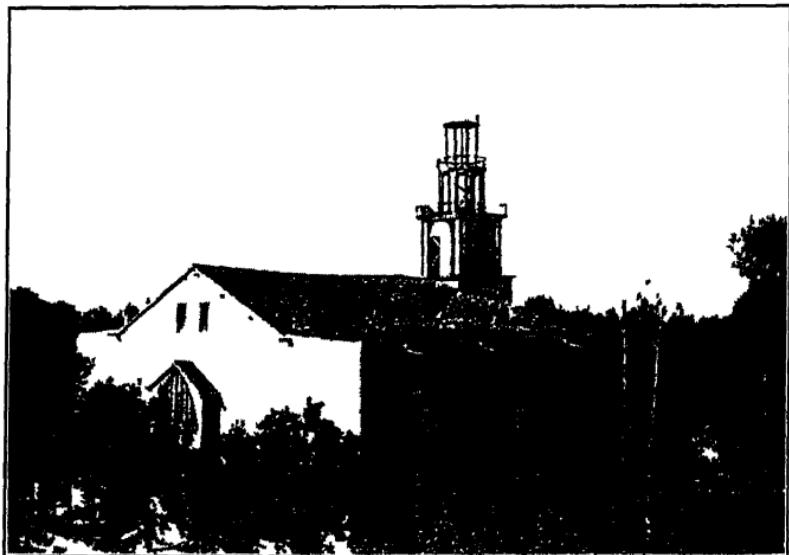
## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Sunday morning I was out shortly after four o'clock to see patients I had not been able to visit before midnight Saturday. Though it was early, there were praying groups in the streets and I was told that the leaders of the defense had sent word to the people saying, "Pray, pray! If God does not help us we are done for."

During the forenoon the great guns at the barracks again opened fire. First, on the trenches in the plain east of us, and those of us who were at home watched, fascinated, each spurt of dust and smoke down there following after a perceptible interval the boom of the cannon. Each explosion seemed nearer than the last, and soon a shell crashed into the mission cemetery at the eastern end of our compound, where at that moment a little child was being laid to rest, and the next fell into our premises, and the next and the next. One fell into a room in the boys' school where forty-five people were gathered, but landing in a barrel of water did no harm. Another struck the church. One entered Miss Knapp's room, exploded there, and parts of it flew through a partition wall into my daughter's room. But my children were comparatively safe in the semi-basement of the house,



RUINS OF USSHER HOUSE AFTER THE BOMBARDMENT



AMERICAN CHURCH IN VAN

This is the only building of any value remaining in the American Compound. It is now (1917) being used by the Russians for services for the soldiers.



## IN TURKEY

where they remained two or three hours, listening to the shriek of each approaching shell, waiting tensely to hear where it would explode.

Mrs. Ussher and Miss Rogers were at their new hospital and were unable to get home.<sup>1</sup> I was making the rounds of the four hospitals outside our compound and continued my work until a messenger came to tell me that a shell had exploded in a room of Mrs. Raynolds's house and hurt an Armenian child. Then I hurried out into the street in my operating-gown, and as I passed, men asked me in an agony of fear for the women and children: "What shall we do now? They are firing on the American flag and it can no longer protect us. What will become of us all?"

<sup>1</sup> Miss Rogers writes: "That last terrible day of the siege came, when shells fell into the American premises almost incessantly. Her [Mrs. Ussher's] children were there. She could n't go to them to see how they were. Through hours of suspense she stayed at her post, with a pale face, yet doing everything as usual.

"Crash upon crash!"

"Then news came. Shells had broken into several American houses — yes, into her own.

"'Could it be?' 'No, no one was hurt.' 'Were they sure?' 'Yes. The walls of the room were shattered. The children were downstairs unharmed.'"

## CHAPTER XXI

### BEN-HADAD'S HOST

SOMETHING impelled me to say, almost in spite of myself: "Do not be anxious; the Turks are saying good-bye. They would n't dare to fire on our flag if they were n't planning to run away."

I found the child had died almost immediately after being injured. This was the only fatality of the bombardment. Although forty-six shells had exploded in our crowded compound and every one of our buildings had been struck, no one else had been hurt.

The cannonading ceased. I looked from the attic of my house through a field-glass down at the Hadji Bekr Barracks, whence the shells had come. As I put the glass to my eyes I saw Turkish soldiers in the courtyard of the barracks hoist the wheels of a mountain gun (not the field gun) to the back of a large mule. At the same moment were driven into this courtyard a lot of loaded pack-horses, cattle, and sheep, and their heads were all turned toward the mountain gate.

## IN TURKEY

I knew at once what this meant, and called to the people below: "It is true! The Turks are running away. Send word to Aram." Twenty minutes later we heard that the Armenians had rushed the strongest Turkish positions and taken the barracks at the foot of Toprak Kala Hill and the guardhouse on its summit.

"Watch Toprak Kala," exultingly shouted the Armenian soldiers at the Arark defenses to the incredulous Turkish soldiers in their positions across the street. And half an hour later both barracks and guardhouse were blazing. Almost immediately we saw a long line of horsemen and pack-animals leaving the Hadji Bekr Barracks and making for the mountains. Then came a letter from Jidatchian, whose household, as I have said, was the only Armenian household spared outside of the besieged city. "The Turks have gone," he wrote.

The Armenians sent out reconnoitering parties to make sure of this. They discovered that the Armenian church and schoolhouse at Arark had been fired by the Turks before their flight. They sent men to the walled city, who found there but thirty Armenian defenders with eight rounds of ammunition left per man. Vartan, the brave

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

leader, had shortly before been shot while running to the aid of a hard-pressed position.

Not until after midnight did the people quite venture to approach the Hadji Bekr Barracks. Was not all this some trick of Jevdet Bey's? But like Ben-Hadad's Syrian army the Turks had fled when no man pursued, for they had heard "the noise of a great host. . . . And the people went out and plundered the camp of the Syrians."<sup>1</sup> They found a small, easily overcome force in the barracks, and stores of food and ammunition. They set the building afire lest it should again become a Turkish stronghold—for there was always in their minds the fear of the return of the Turks, and they had not enough men to extend their own lines. A magnificent blaze it made, and in the light of that the people danced and laughed and sang, almost crazed by the sudden reaction of joy at the very hour when their last hope seemed gone.

With the morning hours came sobering scenes, for search of the Armenian houses whose occupants had not succeeded in fleeing to the Armenian lines of defense before the siege—and there were many of these, very many in the heart of

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings 7.

## IN TURKEY

the Turkish quarters — discovered there Armenians with their throats cut, and wells filled with mutilated bodies. And all Armenian prisoners and Russian prisoners of war had been killed before the Turks fled. Small wonder that some of the men who saw these things should wreak vengeance on the Turks who had been left behind. I went to the ruins of the Hadji Bekr Barracks to put a stop to the outrages I heard were going on in one of the smaller buildings that had not been burned, and Mr. Yarrow went to the Turkish military hospital for Miss McLaren, from whom we had not been permitted to hear throughout the siege. She was not there. While he was gone—or after his return, I do not remember which—the Spörris hastened to us with a note Jevdet Bey had left for them with Jidatchian. He wrote that he had sent Schwester Martha and Miss McLaren to Bitlis with the Turkish wounded; they had consented to go.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Yarrow found in that hospital a score of dead bodies and about sixty wounded men, most of them dying. When the other patients, about seven hundred they said, had been sent away four

<sup>1</sup> Their tragic experiences there will be elsewhere related. Miss McLaren has but just (October, 1917) returned to America.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

leader, had shortly before been shot while running to the aid of a hard-pressed position.

Not until after midnight did the people quite venture to approach the Hadji Bekr Barracks. Was not all this some trick of Jevdet Bey's? But like Ben-Hadad's Syrian army the Turks had fled when no man pursued, for they had heard "the noise of a great host. . . . And the people went out and plundered the camp of the Syrians."<sup>1</sup> They found a small, easily overcome force in the barracks, and stores of food and ammunition. They set the building afire lest it should again become a Turkish stronghold—for there was always in their minds the fear of the return of the Turks, and they had not enough men to extend their own lines. A magnificent blaze it made, and in the light of that the people danced and laughed and sang, almost crazed by the sudden reaction of joy at the very hour when their last hope seemed gone.

With the morning hours came sobering scenes, for search of the Armenian houses whose occupants had not succeeded in fleeing to the Armenian lines of defense before the siege—and there were many of these, very many in the heart of

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings 7.

## IN TURKEY

the Turkish quarters — discovered there Armenians with their throats cut, and wells filled with mutilated bodies. And all Armenian prisoners and Russian prisoners of war had been killed before the Turks fled. Small wonder that some of the men who saw these things should wreak vengeance on the Turks who had been left behind. I went to the ruins of the Hadji Bekr Barracks to put a stop to the outrages I heard were going on in one of the smaller buildings that had not been burned, and Mr. Yarrow went to the Turkish military hospital for Miss McLaren, from whom we had not been permitted to hear throughout the siege. She was not there. While he was gone—or after his return, I do not remember which—the Spörris hastened to us with a note Jevdet Bey had left for them with Jidatchian. He wrote that he had sent Schwester Martha and Miss McLaren to Bitlis with the Turkish wounded; they had consented to go.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Yarrow found in that hospital a score of dead bodies and about sixty wounded men, most of them dying. When the other patients, about seven hundred they said, had been sent away four

<sup>1</sup> Their tragic experiences there will be elsewhere related. Miss McLaren has but just (October, 1917) returned to America.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

days before, these had been left behind without food or water or attendance. The sights and smells in that place were indescribably horrible. He returned to our compound to make arrangements for moving thither the living men. Aram gave us an order forbidding any one to trespass in this hospital, which was formally turned over to the Red Cross. Armed with this order one of our nurses went there and found that a half-crazed boy, fresh from the dreadful sights in those outside-the-lines Armenian houses, was shooting in the wards, and had shot several of the patients. The nurse drove him out. When Mr. Yarrow went back he found that a large number of those he had left had since died. The rest, terrified, implored him not to leave them again. So he stayed on until the last living man could be taken from there up to the lace-house connected with our premises. One of these Turks, while being thus carried, boasted that he had killed twenty Armenians. One bearer dropped his end of the litter and left him; the other got him safely to the hospital.

The Armenian refugees were rapidly leaving our premises. The fighting men were searching the city for hidden Turks, of whom they found

## IN TURKEY

quite a number, especially in a rather distant gypsy quarter. The men they put to death; the women and children they spared. But where to keep them safe from irresponsible gamins like the boy of the military hospital episode? There was only one place—our compound; so to us were brought these Turkish refugees.

In this respect the Armenians showed themselves far more humane than the Turks. In other respects they did not comport themselves in a manner worthy of the splendid spirit they had manifested during the siege. They burned and murdered; the spirit of loot took possession of them, driving out every other thought. Work, everything else, was neglected. The leaders closed their eyes to what was going on. Our protests were in vain for two or three days—until the first madness passed. We remembered what they had had to endure from the Turk all their lives. Much of this loot was only recovered plunder. And many would not injure a Moslem and restrained others, because, they said, "We are Christians."

The Boy Scouts—all honor to them—kept their heads, however, and, taking no advantage of this chance to enrich themselves, helped ma-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

terially in getting food and water to those in the hospitals. They were practically our only helpers for a time in our care of the sick and wounded and of the refugees newly thrust upon us.

Meanwhile we had learned what was the "noise of a great host" which had set to flight the Turkish army. Tuesday afternoon, May 18, in came the advance guard of the Russo-Armenian regiment which preceded by six hours the main army. They had expected to find Van still in a state of siege and were amazed at finding it in the hands of the Armenians. From them we learned that one of the twelve Armenian messengers had got through into Persia the 8th of May. Our message had been passed on to the Russian Consul and immediately dispatched by him to his Government and published in the papers of both Russia and America.

Wednesday and Thursday the Russian army came marching in, and those orderly ranks of trim-uniformed, fair-skinned Europeans — "believe me, they looked good" to those whom they had saved from death.

We saw many thousands of these Russian troops as they poured into and then out of the city on their way to Bitlis during the next few

## IN TURKEY

weeks, and were much drawn to the brave boys. Their camp was contiguous to our premises, and evenings we would listen with delight to their harmonious singing around the camp-fires—a strong contrast to the weird minor wailings which Orientals call music.

I think it was on Thursday that a reception was given to General Nicolaieff and the keys of the citadel and city were handed over to him. The next day we invited him and his staff to dine with our American circle. Through him the Armenians sent a resolution to Petrograd expressing their gratitude to the American missionaries for the protection and help they had given the non-combatants throughout the siege, and for their care of the wounded, suffering, and starving.

## CHAPTER XXII

### OUR TURKISH REFUGEES

FOR the first time in seven hundred years the Armenians of Van were given a chance to govern themselves. Aram, who had been their leader throughout the siege, and who had won the respect and gratitude of all classes, was made governor of the province.

People began to rebuild their houses and business was resumed, but not in *the* business quarter in the walled city; that was a mass of charred ruins, which no one attempted to restore; about sixteen thousand shells had been fired into it from Castle Rock. A period of almost feverish activity followed the Russian occupation.

The Russians reported finding the villages full of dead bodies, and the rivers full of them too. They sent out squads to burn these; fifty-five thousand bodies were cremated. They captured Kurdish villages. Many Kurdish tribes promptly went over to the Russians, yet watched their chance to attack Armenians. Jevdet Bey

## IN TURKEY

gathered his forces again and made a stand at Kavash, about twenty miles from Van, but was slowly driven back after severe fighting.

The soldiers brought more Turkish women and children and old men to us, until we had a thousand under our protection. Our schools had resumed work (except the schools in the walled city) so we could with great difficulty spare room for them, but by crowding somewhat, we turned over for their occupation the old primary school and the old boys' high-school building.

But the care of these thousand Turks was a far more onerous task than the care of the six thousand Armenians had been. In the first place, we had no help at all at first from Armenians, who were all too busy with the reconstruction of their own affairs; later, the few teachers of our former school in the walled city did help us somewhat. Then, too, it was most difficult to get any food for them. Stores of wheat had been found, but the city had an army to feed, as the Russian commissariat had been left several days in the rear.

Again, these people would not help each other as the Armenians had done; the contrast between the two sets of refugees, Moslem and Christian,

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

was an exceedingly striking object lesson in the difference between the teachings of Mohammed and of Christ, and their effect on human character. The Armenians had been self-sacrificing, generous, helpful, and cheerful. These Turks were callous, indifferent to each other's sufferings, utterly selfish. They came into the compound cursing and threatening us, stole from us and from each other when they had opportunity, and were continually quarreling. Very few could be got to do a hand's turn of work for the common good. They snatched away the daily ration of little children and hid it for some possible future need. I found one woman with twelve, another with fifteen, loaves of bread so hidden.

They were filthy beyond description in person and habits. Mrs. Ussher, Mrs. Yarrow, Miss Rogers, and Miss Silliman toiled day after day at the task of getting all these poor creatures bathed and their vermin-infested hair clipped close. The needs of the little children especially burdened my wife's heart. She secured with great difficulty a daily supply of milk, boiled it and distributed it herself, spending hours among them every day. There was so much to be done

## IN TURKEY

in the service of the refugees that Mr. Yarrow simply had to devote all his time to this work, dropping other tasks.

The wild Cossacks considered these Turkish women their legitimate prey. The general gave us a small guard to protect them, but even so, for a while there was hardly a night when a hubbub in the "Turkish quarters" would not arouse Mr. Yarrow and myself, to hasten with lanterns and pistols to their rescue. The Cossacks would skin over the walls at our approach, so that but once did we succeed in arresting any.

We begged the general to send these refugees, with a guard sufficient to protect them, out to deserted villages where they could have room and freedom, and, if given also some sheep and cattle, could soon become self-supporting. But he was too much occupied with other matters to attend to this. After a while the Russians transferred about two hundred and fifty of them to the premises of the German orphanages, together with nearly three hundred new refugees. The Germans would have absolutely nothing to do with them, and hunger riots followed. Then the Russian Red Cross began to feed these Turks on the German premises, and

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

later sent a daily ration of bread and meat to our charges also, for we had come to the end of our funds and of our resources in the way of food.

The Russian Red Cross was supported largely by the Zemstvo Unions. A representative of the Unions told us that he thought the Countess Alexandra Tolstoy (daughter of the famous novelist) would be willing to help us. She was caring for refugees in the Erzerum province. He was going to her; if we would telegraph to him after his arrival there concerning our need, no doubt she would come to us.

We did so; the Countess came the last week of June, and after several days of readjustment took over the care of the Turks, though they had to remain in our compound. With her, as helpers, she had brought two very young men, a nephew of hers and his chum. We expected to take them into our families and did so the first few days, but they preferred to be independent, so accepted rooms from us in one of the boys' school dormitories, where they set up a picnicky sort of housekeeping for themselves.

We liked the Countess immensely; she seemed such a simple, whole-souled young woman, devoted to the welfare of her charges and not afraid

## IN TURKEY

of hard work; with a decided sense of humor, too, and capable of finding pleasure in little things. On her birthday we gave her a surprise party, carrying her the traditional frosted cake with candles and a flower wreath with which to crown her. She enjoyed the whole thing like a child, and declared that never had a birthday of hers been so delightfully celebrated before.

One day, about the middle of June, out of a clear sky, as it were, an *American* dropped at our door. He had really come with General Trokin by way of Bashkalla, and was a well-known Associated Press correspondent, D. B. Macgowan. He had been with the Russian army for a month, and told us that General Trokin had often praised the bravery and efficiency of his Armenian troops. During that month he, of course, had been cut off from communication with his headquarters and found that in Van he could not get into touch with them either. We had had no mail or telegraph service since before the siege, and had received no news from the outside world, though General Nicolaieff had kindly allowed us to send out letters in the care of his special messengers. Mr. Macgowan decided, therefore, not to go on with the army

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

to Bitlis as he had planned, but to return to Moscow for a few days.

He offered to take with him as far as Russia our son Neville, whom we had been planning to send to America for his schooling. Miss Silliman's furlough was due that year; she sorely needed it, and was little likely to have another such chance of safe escort. So at forty-eight hours' notice all preparations for the journey and for the long separation were made. We accompanied the travelers the first half-day of this journey; then my wife and I bade our first-born good-bye, little dreaming—

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE BLACK DEATH

NOT only the commissariat, but the ambulance corps had been left several days in the rear by the Russian army in its hurried march. The Russian wounded were, therefore, brought to our hospital at first. Later their base hospital was established at Van. My own work increased rather than diminished, however, for there was a great deal of sickness in the city. A very severe form of bacillary dysentery became epidemic, especially among our Turkish refugees, despite all our efforts to help them for they seemed to have no stamina, no will to live. They would not nurse their own sick and our Armenian nurses were already overtaxed, and their number greatly reduced by illness. Mr. Yarrow made vigorous representations to General Nicolaieff which induced him to send some Red Cross men to help in the surgical dressings. They were willing to work in our hospital, but refused with utter loathing to have anything to do with Turks.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Late in June appeared that fearful scourge, typhus, among these refugees. A great many were infected before we knew of the first cases. It was impossible wholly to isolate the cases—there were too many of them and we simply had no more room; and, besides, just at this point I reached the end of my tether, physically. I was going about my work, very ill, yet hardly realizing what the matter was.

I had begun my work in the fall unrested, and that work and responsibility had been trebled by the fact I have mentioned that I was the only civilian physician left in the city after war began. There had been for some months cruel anxiety connected with illnesses in my family, about which I have not written. During the siege I had worked nineteen and twenty hours a day with not a night of unbroken rest, and there had been no let-up since.

Yet even now I felt that our hospital should, contrary to our usual custom, be kept open during the summer. I was overruled, however. It was almost impossible to get food for the patients; the nurses were at the breaking point, and needed rest. It was decided that the hospital should be closed—later than usual—July 15.

## IN TURKEY

Our schools also were to be closed later than usual, on July 8.

My wife had arrived at the breaking point too. But when released by the Countess from her work among the refugees, her concern was not for herself, but for our children. She was anxious to get them away from the foul, pestilence-ridden city, especially as they all had whooping-cough. So she went to Artamid (see twelfth chapter), and cleansed and made habitable the house there. She took the children down Thursday, July 1, returned the next morning to pay off her lace-workers, and Friday evening I drove down with her, planning to spend Sunday there myself, for, like her, I was feeling wretchedly ill. The next morning we felt a little better, but that night we went to bed with a high fever.

The next three weeks are an absolute blank in my memory.

Long afterward I was told little by little the history of those three weeks. Miss Knapp, who had remained in Van for the close of school, hearing of our illness, came down early Monday morning to take care of us. That same day Mr. and Mrs. Yarrow both became very ill, and

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Miss Bond, directing her Armenian nurses to empty the hospital as quickly as possible, went to their house to nurse them. Thursday Miss Rogers came down to Artemid ill with what she thought was a malarial attack. She was unable to leave her bed the next day.

The sickness proved to be typhus, and we had all contracted it from the Turkish refugees. Miss Silliman, when she reached Tiflis, was ill there a week with what I am sure was a mild form of the same disease. Fortunately for us there were now at last good Russian doctors and a good Armenian doctor in Van, and they were very kind. One of them came regularly the nine miles to Artemid to attend us. After the first few days Miss Knapp had the help during the day of a faithful hospital orderly called Haig, and at night our head nurse Garabed and one of the girl nurses took care of us.

In the city several of our hospital nurses had the typhus. Some of Countess Alexandra's helpers also fell ill, and as her funds had come to an end and she was sent word from Russia that no more were forthcoming for her work, she went to General Nicolaieff and told him he would simply have to send the Turkish refugees out to

## IN TURKEY

the villages with a guard, as we had begged him to do weeks before. He sent them.

Mrs. Yarrow was dangerously ill, and one night they feared she would not live. She passed the crisis safely, however, on the 12th, and the next day Miss Bond came to Artemid, feeling that we had the greater need of her because we were so far from the doctors. My sister took the Yarrow children to our house in the city and looked after them, and Mrs. Raynolds managed the business affairs of the station.

My wife had a very severe form of the disease. She had been utterly worn out by the overwork and strain of many months. Probably there was no hope for her from the very first. After three days of unconsciousness, at about midnight, July 14, she entered into eternal life.

She was laid to rest the next day in the little plot of hallowed ground on our American premises in the city. She had given her life, and all the hopes and joys and fulfillments the future had promised, for those poor Turkish women and children she had toiled for so devotedly.

I was so ill that they did not dare to tell me of my loss until after more than two weeks had passed. After the typhus crisis, pneumonia de-

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

veloped, and then came another frequent complication of typhus, a parotid abscess, which for lack of skilled surgical treatment caused me untold suffering, endangered reason and life, and has left me a lifelong reminder of itself. When I recovered consciousness I was too weak to ask many questions and kept my vague, troubled wondering to myself.

When Miss Bond left Mr. and Mrs. Yarrow, Schwestern Anna and Kathe and Fräulein Spörri took turns in nursing them and were most devoted and kind; and Frau Spörri was a great help and comfort to Mrs. Raynolds. Mr. Yarrow was exceedingly ill, very delirious from the first, and when the crisis came the doctors gave up hope and thought he would not live two hours. Then Mrs. Raynolds and Frau Spörri in a room apart prayed together for two hours, the tears streaming down their faces, that his life might be spared. Returning to his room Mrs. Raynolds found him conscious and knew their prayers had been answered. "Oh, Mr. Yarrow," she exclaimed, "I am so glad you are back again, and I am so glad God answers prayer. He has given you back your life, and you ought to feel more than ever that it's His."

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE EXODUS OF A NATION

FOR ten weeks the Russians had occupied the vilayet of Van and had pushed on toward Bitlis, making an effort to save the remnant of the Armenians in the two provinces. But it was not Russia's plan to make a conquest of Turkey at this time; she was not prepared for the war and needed all her munitions at the German front. Pro-German traitors at the head of affairs in Petrograd sent out ammunition that would not fit the guns and ordered a retreat from all the fronts at this time. General Nicolaieff could not betray military secrets, but others gave us hints, and he wrote to Mr. Yarrow, "There are three roads open out of Van." The note came after we were all taken ill and I knew nothing of it till long afterward.

Late in the afternoon of Saturday, July 31, sailing vessels from the west bore down upon Artamid like birds fleeing before a storm. They passed on to the port of Van, all but one, which

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

landed its passengers close to our house. They were refugees leaving their villages in the region beyond this inlet of the lake because the Russian army was retreating from Bitlis. Just then a messenger arrived from the city with the astounding news that General Nicolaieff had issued a proclamation bidding all the people of the province, foreigners as well as Armenians, to flee. The city was already rapidly emptying itself. It was Hagop, the school janitor, who had lessened his own chances of escape by coming to tell us. Miss Bond and Miss Knapp begged him to secure and send down a hired carriage for me and for Miss Rogers, who had arisen from her sick-bed but a few days before; also to send down our long cart for the rest if possible. Hagop himself had never driven a team, but promised to attempt this if no one else could be found to do it—a promise that was not kept. The two older children were sent back with him in the small cart he brought down. Boghos, our cook, accompanied them on foot, anxious to get his family out of the city; Haig, my faithful hospital orderly, remained.

Night came, but no carriage, no further sign from our friends in the city. The three Ameri-

## IN TURKEY

can ladies knew what panic fear is capable of in an Oriental country, and that it was quite possible that Mrs. Raynolds, in the face of this wild terror, would not be able to find one man to come to our aid. They could not send Haig, for roads were such that it was practically impossible for one absolutely unaccustomed to driving to bring down the long cart and take it back loaded in safety, and indeed they feared never to see him again should he once leave us. What might not be taking place in the city! Houses could be seen blazing here and there, but whose they were, by whom and for what reason they had been set afire, could only be surmised.

Unceasingly throughout that night could be heard from the highway half a mile distant the sound of a great multitude hastening northward — the peasantry of the region fleeing from their homes.

At last! — wheels close by, and a moment later a Russian soldier stood on our porch steps in the moonlight. He seemed an angel of deliverance to the anxious watchers, for by General Nicolieff's orders he had brought us two ambulances. I was carefully bundled up and placed in one of them.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Soon we were in the highway and a part of the ever northward-flowing stream of humanity. The road was filled with cattle, laden asses, and oxen, ox-carts piled with the household possessions of whole villages, women with babies in their arms and bundles on their backs, children pattering along with terror in their eyes, old men hobbling as fast as they could, strong men with prodigious burdens. Many were carrying all they possessed in the world—a pitiful all—on their own backs. These villagers had set fire to their grain-fields before leaving, so that they should not feed the triumphantly advancing Turkish army.

After more than three hours of slowest travel we reached our mission compound, and our ambulance-drivers, panic-stricken to find that their army had already left,—all but the staff and the rear guard,—set us down in a hurry and disappeared.

The ladies held a council of war at the bedside of Mr. Yarrow, who was hardly able to sit up, but whose mind was quite clear. The only thing left for us to do was to flee—if we could. The city would soon be completely deserted. The fact of our being Americans and neutrals had

## IN TURKEY

not saved our premises during the bombardment and would probably not save us from the Turkish army when it should arrive, as Jevdet Bey had proved to us during the siege that he was enraged against us for the aid and comfort we were giving the non-combatants and the wounded.<sup>1</sup>

We had not conveyances or horses enough for our party—fifteen Americans and ten Armenians. Of the latter eight were women and children, three of the women nurses, the others lame, halt, or ill. Boghos had found no conveyance for his sick wife and had determined to remain behind and die with her; the Turks had never been known to spare man, woman, or child left in territory from which Russians had retreated. We must take these two and their children. We would be glad to have his help, but this meant one more sick person to provide for. Garabed, plucky little fellow, had sent off his wife and his mother, but had remained behind to help us get out of the country. For this company we had three horses, a small two-wheeled cart which

<sup>1</sup> Months afterward I learned of his having said that when he reached Van he should find Dr. Ussher and plunge a dagger into his heart. Yet see note on last page.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

would seat three, and an American grocer's delivery cart.

It was thought that General Nicolaieff might give us ambulances if the American ladies should all go to him at once and plead our case urgently. He had lent the two ambulances that had brought us up from Artemid at the insistence of Mrs. Yarrow, who had risen from her sick-bed to go to him the night before. But entreaties were vain. He had not enough ambulances for his own sick and wounded, he said, and added that he and his staff were leaving at once; General Trokin, of the army retreating from Bitlis, would arrive the next day and we might appeal to him; he might be able to help us; the danger was not immediate; we should have plenty of time to get safely to the Russian border.

Somewhat reassured by this latter statement and hardly knowing how we could possibly get away without help, we gave up all thought of trying to leave that day, and its remaining hours were spent in preparing food for the journey, for we knew none could be bought along the way. But the next morning came news that convinced us that we must not wait for General Trokin and

## IN TURKEY

his problematical help. Not far from Pergree (Berguird), a two days' journey distant, the Russo-Armenian Volunteers were doing their utmost to keep open the line of retreat into Russia. They were being gradually driven back, and soon escape would be impossible.

We prepared to start at once. Bedding was spread on the floor of the long cart upon which we three sick ones were to be laid. Garabed must drive two of the horses harnessed to this cart, though he had never driven a horse before. Mrs. Raynolds must drive my horse harnessed to the small cart, taking with her the two babies and the five-year-old. The rest, young children, convalescents, and all, must walk. Not nearly enough food for the journey could be carried in these carts in addition to their human freight; the babies and the sick ones needed milk; so our cows must become beasts of burden. The cows objected. When released after the loading process they speedily rid themselves of their burdens and, dashing into the front yard, so frightened my horse that he ran away and broke the shafts of the cart to which he was harnessed.

Just at that moment two Russian Red Cross doctors rode into the yard. They had arrived in

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

advance of General Trokin's army, and, knowing we had a dispensary, had undoubtedly come to appropriate its contents, believing us gone. Evidently embarrassed, they turned and left the premises without a word. As evidently, a happy thought struck them when outside, and they returned to say: "Do not be anxious; we will see that you get safely to Igdir. Won't you give us the supplies in the dispensary? If we do not take them the Turks will, and we might as well have them."

They had to wait until the arrival of the army that night before they could begin to redeem their promise. The next morning they sent for me a litter hung between two horses ridden by Red Cross orderlies, and for the rest of the party two ambulances, springless, two-wheeled carts with canopy and Red Cross insignia. These with our own two carts (the smaller having meanwhile been mended) were made to suffice for our whole party, for those who were able took turns walking throughout the journey. Thus on Tuesday, August 3, 1915, we left our homes and possessions, knowing quite well that we should never see them again.

Before nightfall, having overtaken many of the

## IN TURKEY

people who had left Van and the region west of it before us on foot, we had become part of the vast ever northward-flowing stream of humanity, the great multitude plodding along in the dust, their faces strained with terror. Not one of all these but knew, most of them by the witness of their own eyes, what it meant to fall into the hands of their oppressors. This was the Exodus of a nation from the land of their captivity. But, alas! it was their homeland as well—the home of the race for centuries before the Turk subjugated all the eastern world. They were leaving the homes they had built with their own hands and the homes of their ancestors for many generations, the fields they had tilled all their lives, the harvests they had sown a few months before, and all their possessions except what they could carry with them in hurried flight. And for what? Bare safety beyond the Russian border, with want and all the bitterness of exile.

A few hours of rest that night at Shah Geldi and we were off the next morning before dawn. Before we started we saw the long line of horse-litters, carrying the most severely wounded, which preceded the ambulances of the Red Cross corps. Its officers had evidently heard some

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

disquieting news about the road ahead, for we were pushed on rapidly all day with a very short rest at noon.

At sunset we were skirting the long north-eastern arm of Lake Van, when we began to hear guns in the distance. People believed these to be the sign of a battle between the Volunteers and the Turks in the mountains just beyond, and their panic fear increased a hundred-fold. The officers of the Red Cross Corps decided we must reach Pergree that night. But how slow was the progress of our heavy ambulances over the vile roads! At one point a four-ox wagon stuck in the mud and blocked all vehicles for an hour or more, since it was on a side hill and there was no passing it from above or below. Later there was a river to ford with a steep bank on the farther side, up which the horses could hardly scramble with their loads.

The Red Cross doctors were indefatigable. They rode back and forth from one end of the line to the other, urging the tired animals, carrying children on their own horses across the river, lighting a bad bit of road with lanterns—for the moon rose late that night. It was two o'clock in the morning when the ambulances of our

## IN TURKEY

American party reached Pergree; I in my horse-litter had arrived there some time before.

When daylight came the officers debated long the advisability of pushing on at once. But the horses were too fagged — they *must* have rest. So it was noon before we set forth. Very soon we had a swift and rather deep river to ford. Struggling up a high bank on the other side we found ourselves in a narrow gorge commanded by precipitous hills bristling with rocks. And from these rocks Turks and Kurds were firing down into the unarmed multitude hemmed in between hills and river. Our Cossack guards galloped off to be the first out of danger, but the Red Cross doctors kept their places in the line and urged people on. Drivers of ambulances and litters whipped up their horses to a mad gallop; it was a race for life. Hundreds threw themselves over the precipice into the river to escape the worse fate of falling into the hands of the Kurds. Fathers and mothers killed their own children to save them from the Turks. But thousands struggled on panting, gasping, for mile after mile. . . .

It seemed an eternity of horror . . .

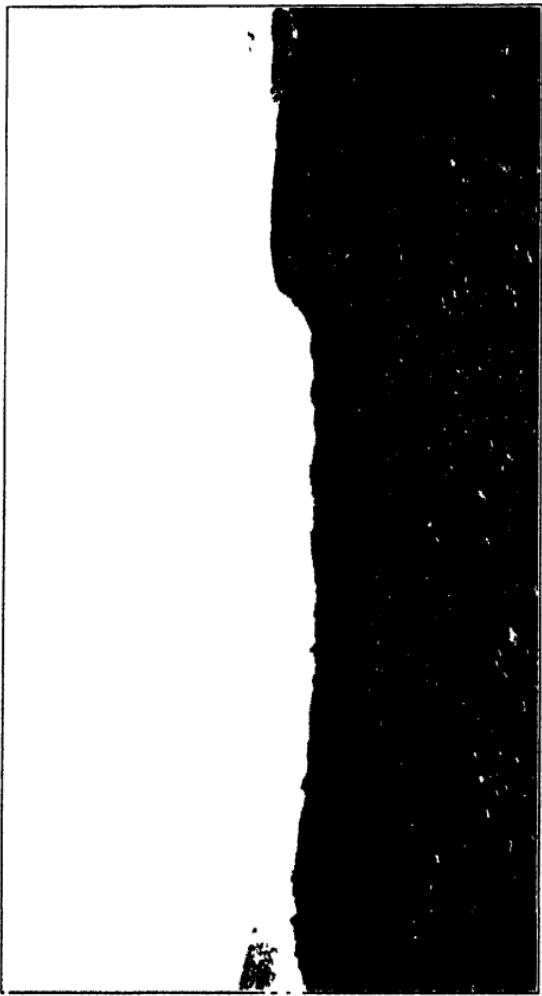
## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

'At last! . . . we were . . . out of that death-trap.

A small band of Volunteers went up into the mountains and silenced the guns for a short time. Then Turkish reinforcements came and the Volunteers fled. That night a guard brought a large number of Armenians through in safety, but after that none succeeded in getting through from beyond Pergree. General Trokin, leaving Van with his army only three hours later than the ambulance corps, after four or five hours on the road, heard something that made him wheel about immediately, return to Van, and make his escape through Persia, the Spörris with him.

More than a year later, in that long, narrow valley through which we had raced so madly, were found the whitening skeletons of about seven thousand men, women, and children who had come to their death by the hand of the Turk that day.

We had barely reached a place of comparative safety when Mrs. Raynolds, descending precipitately from her cart because she thought that something had gone wrong about the harness, fell and broke her leg. It was hastily



MOUNT ARARAT FROM THE RUSSIAN SIDE  
*Lava in foreground*



## IN TURKEY

put in splints by a Red Cross surgeon and she was laid carefully in one of the ambulances. The next morning the broken leg was put in a plaster cast; but the jolting over these rough mountainous roads during the remainder of the journey must have been torture to her.

We spent the night at Bayazid Agha, although those in charge of the ambulances seemed to be very uneasy and left us in doubt as to whether we were to rest only an hour or so and then push on, or would be routed out of slumber at 1 A.M.

Friday we crossed the Taparez Range, all but the helpless ones of our party on foot, mingling with the multitude. Saturday night we climbed Chingli Mountain, one of the foothills of Mount Ararat, reaching at 3 A.M. the Red Cross camp where we were to spend Sunday.

At one place between Bayazid Agha and Chingli Mountain we had passed a building where bread was being baked and distributed to thousands of the exiles, but who the good Samaritans were I do not know. One of the greatest hardships these people had to endure during their steady march was the scarcity of water. Springs were far apart and such crowds would gather round one of these, after plodding half a

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

day through the dust under the scorching sun, that few had a chance fully to slake their thirst. Waters became polluted and disease spread. Many thousands died of dysentery soon after reaching Russia.

Those who traveled with us had come not only from the Van vilayet, but from the Bitlis and Erzerum provinces. We reached Igdır Monday, August 10. During that week more than two hundred and seventy thousand refugees poured over the border into the Caucasus, and a friend told us later of seeing the Erivan plain filled with a shifting multitude overflowing the horizon, wandering aimlessly hither and thither; strangers in a strange land, footsore, weary, starving, wailing like lost and hungry children.

## CHAPTER XXV

### IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

THE Russian Government divided the flood of Armenian refugees into smaller streams and directed these into different districts. Russian families took some of them into their own homes. The great majority had to take shelter in stables, sheds, or under walls. Many died from the effects of exposure as well as from disease.

At Igdır we parted company with the Red Cross Corps. The orderlies who had charge of my litter took me to five military hospitals whose superintendents turned me away from their doors as soon as they learned that I had had typhus. At the sixth, an officers' hospital, the wife of the physician in charge, in the face of all protests, declared, "We *will* take him in! Poor man!" This physician telegraphed to the American Consul in Tiflis, F. Willoughby Smith, and sent me in an automobile to the ambulance train. Consul Smith sent his dragoman to meet the train at Tiflis and to take me in an automobile to the city hospital.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

The rest of the party, after some delay, got to Tiflis on Thursday. The first hotel they tried had "no vacant rooms" and directed them to another. No wonder! They had been obliged to sleep in their clothes during the week's journey from Van to Igdır, for the well ones had lain on the ground in the open with insufficient covering, and the nights had been cold among the mountains. To the grime and dust of this week's travel had been added the soot and cinders of an eighteen hours' railway journey, and the change of clothing each had tried to bring from Van had with three exceptions been thrown out to lighten the ambulances during the race for life in that narrow valley between Pergree and Bayazid Agha.

Consul Smith secured a room in a private hospital for Mrs. Raynolds and did everything in his power to make things easier for us throughout our stay. We had been half-starved during the journey. The children succumbed to the prevailing dysentery; all were more or less ill. I had the disease in its worst form; for four days I could take no nourishment, medicines had no effect, and the doctors gave me up to die.

Among the few things saved had been my  
[ 316 ]

## IN TURKEY

Bible. Taking it now I prayed that God would guide me to the message He wished me to have. Then, almost too weak to hold up the little book, I let it fall open of itself on my chest, placed my finger on it and turned it up to see what the message might be.

I found I had placed my finger on the eighth verse of the twenty-eighth chapter of the Book of Acts, and I read: "And it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery: unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him." I must confess that I had not known that the word "dysentery" was in the English translation of the Scriptures, and as I read this from the American Standard Revised Bible it came as a surprise. I said to myself: "What does this mean? I asked God to give me the message He wished me to have and I must believe that He has. Does it mean that He wants me to claim my healing from Him? Lord, I cannot. I am too weak; I have not faith to lay hold." The answer came back with perfect clearness: "It is not your faith, but the faith of Jesus Christ that saves and that heals." Instantly there came to mind the scene in a classroom twenty-five years ago when

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

I was studying Greek under Professor Max Mueller and we were reading Galatians 2:20, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by *the faith of the Son of God.*" I asked the Professor, "Could that not be translated 'faith *in* the Son of God' instead of 'the faith *of* the Son of God'?" His reply was "No, not literally, for it is Genitive case (Possessive), and means Jesus Christ's faith." This came so vividly to me that it seemed a reply to my professed lack of faith; so I said, "Then, Lord Jesus, Thou must do it all; the faith must be Thine and the works Thine; I can do nothing; I leave it to Thee."

A few minutes later there was another twinge of agony, and as I reached for the bell to call the nurse the thought came to me, "This is a test. You said you would leave it to Jesus. Why don't you?" Drawing back my hand from the bell I said, "I will." That was the extent of my act of faith. I did not even pray to be healed, but from that hour I was healed.

Some may think that the thing to emphasize in this experience is the healing, but miraculous as that was, it is not what appeals most to me. The healing might be a unique experience for me and not for a thousand others. The striking

## IN TURKEY

thing to me is that God was cognizant of the needs of an individual and spoke to him in this twentieth century. Jesus Messiah, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, wrought as He did on the shores of Galilee, and fulfilled his promise, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age."

It has grown upon me since that there is a tremendous depth of meaning in that phrase, "The faith of the Son of God." It seems to explain what had long puzzled me—"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed." We all know we have some faith, and yet we don't remove the mountain nor the tree. At least, I don't. God's power is not given us to play with, but all the faith I need to claim anything that is within the will of God is the belief that Jesus Christ, my Saviour and LORD, has faith enough to claim anything for me. I may question the power of my faith, but who questions the power of *His* faith!

Mrs. Raynolds was rapidly growing worse. The broken bone refused to knit, and she seemed to be suffering from a general collapse of the whole system. We felt that the sorrows of the people for whom she had labored all her life

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

were weighing her down; and that she was really dying of a broken heart.

I have written in an earlier chapter of Dr. Raynolds's going to America in 1913 to further the interests of the newly established Van College, and of Mrs. Raynolds's decision not to accompany him. He had planned to return in August, 1914; then the war broke out, and all sailings were canceled by the American Board. He had longed to be in Van and we had longed for his presence many a time during the year that had passed. Now we wished for him more than ever.

On August 24 we were startled by a telegram from Petrograd to Consul Smith signed "Raynolds," stating that he "and White" would arrive in Tiflis four days later. Mrs. Raynolds was sinking rapidly. Friday night, August 27, she quietly passed away, and Dr. Raynolds came too late to bid her good-bye, but not too late to see her peaceful face and to perform for her the last services human love could render. She was laid to rest in the cemetery of the German Lutheran Church in Tiflis, whose pastor, Herr Meyer, showed us most tender sympathy.

When Dr. Raynolds had learned by cable of

## IN TURKEY

the Russian occupation of Van he had planned to leave America as soon as Mr. Harry White, graduating that summer from the Massachusetts Agricultural College, could be ready to join him. Mr. White intended to teach in Van College. They had not learned in Petrograd of the evacuation of Van, nor did the American Ambassador in the course of their long interview with him tell them of our being in Tiflis and Mrs. Raynolds's illness—facts which were in his possession. Had he done so they could have hastened their departure and Dr. Raynolds would have arrived in time to see his dying wife. But from Dr. Barton in America he had soon received the cable, "Van Americans in Tiflis; communicate with them before proceeding Van"; and had thereupon left immediately.

While in Tiflis we learned that our buildings in Van had been burned. Nothing could be done for Armenians now without relief funds, and of course we had none. So Dr. Raynolds and Mr. White returned with us, and we left September 4 for Petrograd.

Before we left, the Spörris and Schwester Anna arrived. They were anxious concerning the fate of Schwester Kathe, who had taken

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

one hundred orphan girls, twenty of them sick, to the lake shore and had embarked in a boat to cross the long arm of Lake Van and thus save fifty miles. Not till months afterward did we learn what her further experiences had been, but I will tell the story here.

Her boat had been attacked by the Turks; four of the people in it had been killed and seven wounded. They had been compelled to land and walk back to Van. Here Schwester Kathe had hoisted the German flag as a protection over the German premises. The next day the Turkish army entered the city, and Jevdet Bey had treated her well. The second night the Turks fled without warning, and she awoke in the morning to find her yard full of Cossacks and the German flag still flying. The Cossacks treated her roughly, but the timely arrival of a Russian doctor saved her. She was, however, sent to Siberia as a German spy, together with Schwester Anna. The Russians were finally persuaded that they were not spies, and permitted them to return to Germany.

Petrograd was full of refugees from Poland, and though we telegraphed ahead and had a man hunting rooms a day and a half, he was un-

## IN TURKEY

able to secure accommodations. Our entire party was exceedingly grateful for the beds prepared for us on tables in the Mayak (Y.M.C.A.) by its American secretaries, who showed us every courtesy and kindness. We were in Petrograd a week and all of us improved very greatly in health.

The day we left Petrograd a most significant revolution came about. The Duma had brought about a deadlock purposely, so as to force the Czar's hand. The Zemstvo Unions were in session in Moscow and all plans were made. The Czar dismissed the Duma and the Unions immediately set up a provisional government in Moscow. The Czar was frightened. He called back the Duma and dismissed the Ministry. The Duma thought they had won a bloodless victory for democracy. The Czar came in person for the first time to the meeting of the Duma, to plead with them. (This visit to the Duma was all that was permitted by the censor to get into the papers.) The leaders of the Duma told him frankly that they were "not proposing to hamper the government to the advantage of their enemies. They were in this war to win and would win it, no matter what the government.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

When they got through with the war they would give their attention to the government."

As soon as matters were quiet again, the Czar forbade the meeting of the Zemstvo Unions in Moscow, thinking he could thus check any further organized effort on the part of the people. These Unions, representing the local government of each district and province, were like municipal councils, regulating all local matters of health, taxes, education, and roads. They were financing the war and the Red Cross. The country soon got into a desperate state financially, and within a year the Czar was compelled to permit the Unions to reassemble. They had learned a lesson, and their succeeding *coup* was more thorough and produced the present revolution and the emancipation of the Russian people.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### OPPORTUNITY

WE spoke constantly in behalf of Armenian relief after reaching America, and in July, 1916, nine months after their arrival here, Dr. Raynolds and Mr. Yarrow went back to the Caucasus to work among the Armenian refugees there, together with missionaries from other stations. They have organized industrial relief which more than doubles the value of each dollar, and also supplies what the people crave as much as they crave food—occupation for their hands and their minds. They are caring for thousands of orphans, the Armenian and Syrian Relief Committee having authorized them to take on the support of fifty thousand at three dollars a month. This committee assumed responsibility for a certain proportion of the refugees in the Caucasus. Russia fed a much larger proportion, but did not attempt to clothe them. England fed many thousands.

In Turkey itself this committee has been feeding three hundred thousand Armenians, besides

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

Syrians and Greeks. The Armenians in other parts of Turkey have suffered even more terribly than have the Armenians of Van. Massacres began in all other provinces in May, 1915. In Bitlis<sup>1</sup> and Mush the Government officials, solemnly swearing that innocent men should not be molested, succeeded in deceiving the Armenians and in making them surrender whatever arms they had for self-defense, entrapped the leaders, slaughtered the men first, then, after indescribable outrages, the women.

In Trebizond soldiers went from house to house, drove the people out of their homes and down to the shore of the Black Sea, into which between eight and ten thousand of them were thrown, according to the official report of the Italian Consul.

In the college town of Marsovan, twelve hundred and sixteen men—professors, teachers, preachers, students, and others—were imprisoned for three days, then tied together in groups of four, marched out to a lonely gorge at midnight, and there slaughtered with axes by gendarmes and Kurds.

<sup>1</sup> The terrible story of the massacres in Bitlis will be told in a later book.

## IN TURKEY

Sometimes orders were given to prepare for deportation within a certain number of days or weeks, but a few hours after these orders soldiers would drive off the people of a town or village unprepared, the men often in one direction, the women in another, and mothers were separated from their children.

Of one group of five thousand Harput people but two hundred and thirteen reached Aleppo, their supposed destination. Four of my old friends among the college professors were most horribly tortured and done to death. The able-bodied men were thrown into the larger rivers on the way. Those who swam were shot. The pretty girls were sold as slaves. The gendarmes stole the clothing and food of the rest. They were driven naked over mountains and across the scorching plains for days and weeks, and taken in open cars like cattle through Aleppo, exposed to the jeers of the populace.

In some towns before deportation the Armenians were compelled to sell their property to Turks, turning over the deeds and receiving gold in payment. The transaction completed, the money was taken from them to be used again in the same way, and they were driven off.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

In other places people were permitted to take with them what could be carried on ox-carts, but during the journey they were parted from these possessions. The gendarmes watched to see who had money to buy food along the way, and at night many were robbed and murdered. Women became the prey of vile men. Many flung themselves into the rivers to drown. Mothers went mad and threw their children into the rivers.

Some were driven to the Syrian desert along the banks of the Euphrates, which was full of putrefying bodies. Many were so parched that they would have slaked their thirst even from this foul water, but the soldiers threatened to shoot those who turned aside for a moment. Women were compelled to leave their children behind on the road to die, because the children could struggle on no longer, and the mothers could not carry them. One witness speaks of several hundred babies buried alive in one grave.

It is the Turkish Government, not the Turkish people, that has done all this.<sup>1</sup> The Govern-

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written extracts have been printed in the *New York Evening Post* from "Two War Years in Constantinople" by Dr. Henry Sturmer, a former war correspondent and officer in the German army, who is convinced of Germany's responsibility for these

## IN TURKEY

ment has tried to deceive its Mohammedan subjects and arouse their hatred against the Christians. Jevdet Bey reported the Van Armenians as in rebellion. The fifty-five thousand slaughtered Armenians in that province were reported as fifty-five thousand Mohammedans massacred by Christians. He described in revolting detail actual atrocities,—women and children, ranging in age from six years to eighty, outraged and mutilated to death,—but made one diabolical change in his description: he said these women were Moslems thus treated by Christians.

Yet few of the Turks were deceived. They distrusted their Government. Eighty out of a hundred of them were opposed to the massacres and deportations, and in some places presented petitions of protest, stating that the Armenians were useful and loyal citizens and that it would be an injury to the country to send them away. Some Valis resigned their positions rather than carry out the orders of Enver and Talaat, who were inexorable.

Famine, caused partly by the war, largely by

atrocities and exposes the methods used by the Turkish Government to deceive the world while destroying the Armenians. Extracts from this book appeared also in the *Literary Digest* of October 6.

## AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

the massacre and deportation of the Christians, the most productive of the population, has reigned in Turkey, and many thousands of innocent Turkish women and children have suffered.<sup>1</sup> They have been fed by our missionaries. Many Turks believe this famine and all the suffering caused by the war to be a judgment from God for their treatment of the widow and the orphan. They marvel at the benevolence that can help them after what has been done by

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above the Turks seem to have begun to count the cost and have ceased the policy of deliberate massacre of the remnant of the Armenians. Many of the survivors are being permitted to find their way back north. Thousands of absolutely destitute refugees have found their way back to Sivas at the heart of the empire, where Miss Graffam, an American lady, alone for more than a year in the midst of suffering that beggars description, writes that she is trying to keep the people alive on ten cents a day (the high cost of food makes this inadequate for even a single meal), but that they are all slowly starving to death. True heroine that she is she adds, "If America will not send enough money to keep these people alive, I will not leave them; I will stay and die with them."

Another relief agent writes that refined young women, who were sold into Turkish harems as slaves and kept till the cost of their food exceeded the value of their service, were offered the alternative of accepting Islam and marrying Mohammedans or being turned into the street. When they refused to deny their faith, they were literally kicked into the street nude, even the modicum of rags which had been left to them torn from their bodies, and modest women have been compelled to find themselves potsherds, scrape graves in the sand, and lying in these throw the earth over themselves to hide during the day and then forage at night for grass roots or carrion to allay the gnawings of hunger.

## IN TURKEY

their Government to Christians.<sup>1</sup> They have had before their eyes unnumbered examples of fortitude and loyalty to Christ. Thousands of Armenians, after struggling footsore and starving along the road to exile for days, whipped along when exhausted, have been taken into Moslem villages and given their choice: "Now accept Mohammed and you shall have a home and food and clothing and fields and implements and seed and a bonus from the Government—everything you need. Refuse and you shall have not a drop of water." With hardly an exception these thousands have turned their backs on all thus offered and have gone into the desert to death, rather than deny Christ.

So the hearts of the Turks are now open to Christian truth as never before in the history of Mohammedanism.

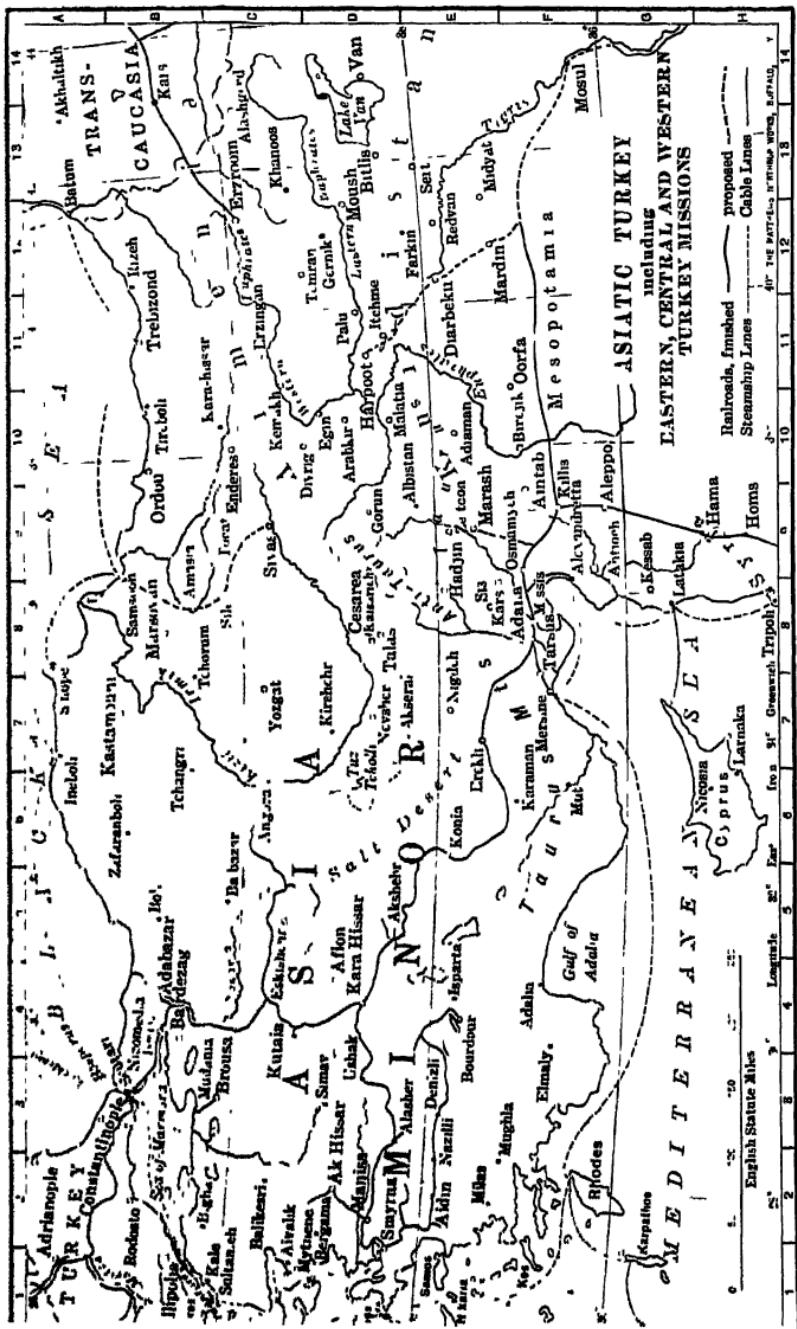
When the war is over the future of the blighted country must be very largely in the hands of the Armenian children who have survived, for, as always hitherto, this Moham-

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written Miss McLaren has returned to this country and she tells me that Jevdet Bey was profoundly impressed when he learned of our care for the Turkish refugees immediately after the siege. "I can never forget it," he said.

## **AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN**

median country must owe its economic and intellectual development to the Christian. These children, these orphans, can be trained now for that stupendous task.

**Behold America's opportunity!**





## **APPENDIX**



## APPENDIX

### A

IN the ninth century Haroun al Raschid granted guarantees and commercial facilities to such Franks as should visit the East with the authorization of their Emperor. Later similar concessions were made to the independent Italian city-states by the Prince of Antioch, the King of Jerusalem, and Sultan Salaadin. The Byzantine Emperors followed this example, and Genoa, Pisa, and Venice all obtained "capitulations." The explanation of this practice is to be found in the fact that the sovereignty of the State was held to apply only to its subjects: the privilege of citizenship was held to be too precious to extend to an alien. When Turkish rule was substituted for Byzantine rule, the system in existence was continued. The chief privileges granted under the capitulations to foreigners resident in Turkey are the following: liberty of residence, inviolability of domicile, liberty to travel by land and sea, freedom of commerce, freedom of religion, immunity from local jurisdiction save under certain safeguards, exclusive extra-territorial jurisdiction over foreigners of the same nationality. In the course of the eighteenth century nearly every European power had obtained these privileges; the United States, Belgium, and Greece followed in the nineteenth century. (See *Encyclopædia Britannica*.)

## B

GERMANY's subjugation policy is so self-confessed that it cannot be questioned. On May 20, 1915, the League of Agriculturists, the League of German Peasants, the Provisional Association of Christian German Peasants, the Central German Manufacturers' Union, the League of Manufacturers, and the Middle-Class Union of the Empire sent the Imperial Chancellor a memorial which says:—

Because it is needful to insure our credit on sea and our military and economic situation for the future in face of England, because the Belgian territory, which is of the greatest economic importance, is closely linked to our principal industrial territory, Belgium must be subjugated to the legislation of the Empire in monetary, financial, and postal matters. Her railways and her water-courses must be closely connected with our communications. By constituting a Walloon territory and a Flemish territory, with a preponderance of the Flemish, and by putting into German hands the properties and the economic undertakings which are of vital importance for dominating the country, we shall organize the Government and the administration in such a manner that the inhabitants will not be able to acquire any influence over the political destiny of the German Empire. . . . As to France, always in consideration of our position toward England, it is of vital interest for us, in respect of our future on the seas, that we should own the coast which borders on Belgium, more or less up the Somme, which would

## APPENDIX

give us an outlet on the Atlantic Ocean. The Hinterland which is necessary to annex at the same time must be of such an extent that economically and strategically the ports where the canals terminate can be utilized to the utmost. Any other territorial conquest in France, beyond the necessary annexation of the mining basins of Briey, should only be made in virtue of considerations of military strategy. . . . If the fortress of Longwy, with the numerous blast furnaces of the region, were returned to the French, and if a new war broke out, with a few long-range guns the German furnaces of Luxemburg (list of which is given) would be paralyzed in a few hours. . . . Thus about twenty per cent of the production of crude iron and of German steel would be lost. Let us say, by the bye, that the high production of steel derived from the iron ore gives to German agriculture the only chance of obtaining the phosphoric acid needed when the importation of phosphates is blockaded. The security of the German Empire in a future war requires, therefore, imperatively the ownership of all mines of iron ore, including the fortresses of Longwy and of Verdun, which are necessary to defend the region.

From this it would appear that even the members of the great middle class of Germany, the majority of whom must be represented by these various societies and unions, are rapidly adopting the Prussian viewpoint.

## C

DR. USSHER's father, the Right Reverend Brandram Boileau Ussher, was at this time Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church in the Dominion of Canada and the Island of Newfoundland. He was born in Dublin, Ireland, youngest son of Captain Richard Beverly Ussher, of H.M. Eighty-sixth Regiment. Captain Ussher was descended from Richard Neville, the great Earl of Warwick, one of whose descendants, who for political reasons took the name of the office he bore, namely, Usher of the Black Rod, thus retaining his influential position when the name of Neville had become unpopular and the "Kingmaker's" influence had waned, subsequently settled in Ireland. To distinguish the family name from the office, the second letter *s* was later added.

Dr. Ussher is descended from a long line of churchmen. His great-great-grandfather was Rector of the Parish of Clontarf, near Dublin, which was held in the family from father to son for over one hundred and fifty years. The Reverend John Ussher, afterwards Astronomer Royal for Ireland, was the last of the family to hold the incumbency. His sons were John Ussher, of Woodpark, father of Richard Beverly, and Rear Admiral Sir Thomas Ussher, K.C.A., who took Napoleon to Elba in H.M.S. Undaunted; he died Naval Commander-in-

## **APPENDIX**

Chief. Dr. Ussher is directly descended from Archbishop Henry Ussher, one of the founders of Trinity College, Dublin, whose brother Arland was the father of James Ussher, the celebrated Primate of Ireland and author of Ussher's *Chronology of the Bible*. (See *Canadian Biography of Public Men*, Ball Wright's *The Ussher Families of Ireland*, *Who's Who*, etc. G. H. K.)

The Riverside Press  
CAMBRIDGE . MASSACHUSETTS  
U . S . A









